UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS

BY

EMILY SPENDER

W. H. SMITH & SON'S SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY,

186, STRAND, LONDON,

AND AT THE RAILWAY BOOKSTALLS.

NOVELS are issued to and received from Subscribers in SETS only.

TERMS.

FOR SUBSCRIBERS OBTAINING THEIR BOOKS FROM A COUNTRY BOOKSTALL:

	6 Months.	12 Months.
For ONE Volume at a time - -	£0 12 0	- 1 1 0
(Novels in more than One Volume are not available for this class of Subscription.)		
For TWO Volumes " - - -	0 17 6	- 1 11 6
(Novels in more than Two Volumes are not available for this class of Subscription.)		
For THREE " " - - -	1 3 0	- 2 2 0
For FOUR " " - - -	1 8 0	- 2 10 0
For SIX " " - - -	1 15 0	- 3 3 0
For TWELVE " " - - -	3 0 0	- 5 5 0

823
Sp 35u
v. 2

UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS.

VOL. II.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS

BY

EMILY SPENDER

AUTHOR OF

"RESTORED," "A TRUE MARRIAGE,"

&c., &c.

"One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1886.

All rights reserved.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/untildaybreaks02spen

823
Sp35u
v.2

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Rose and the Shamrock	1
II.	Mrs. Penrose	12
III.	A Morning Call	57
IV.	The Sword Falls	81
V.	War is Declared	101
VI.	The Vicar's Ultimatum	129
VII.	No Alternative	143
VIII.	The Last Appeal	176
IX.	Mr. Tremayne comes Home	200
X.	Two Sparrows	218
XI.	Love is not Enough	244
XII.	A Pack of Cards	274

UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROSE AND THE SHAMROCK.

The changes which come in human life are generally slow and gradual, like those in the world of nature. But sometimes the volcanic fires burst forth, and alter the face of the country in an hour. Such a catastrophe had now befallen Cecilia Tremayne. The woman who had lived her life of thirty years in a round of small,

daily duties and daily pleasures, peaceful if somewhat monotonous and uneventful, now, for the first time, felt the upheaving and devastating force of passionate love.

The whole world had changed to her. Love took all pleasure, all meaning out of her homely, every-day pursuits, it killed all her delight in her flowers, her birds, her little art-treasures; it filled her nights with wild dreams, and wakings of anguish; her whole life was burned and withered up, as when a fiery wind sweeps over the pastures in a southern land.

Always in her past life her wish had been like the poet's:

> 'And most of all would I flee the cruel madness of love,
> The honey of poison-flowers, and all the measureless ill.'

The days when she did not go to Morwell Lodge tormented her with cravings; she said to herself:

'If I see him to-morrow for one half-hour, I shall be satisfied.'

And to-morrow came, and with it that one feverish, vivid half-hour, which left her ten times more miserable than she was before. For seeing Maurice was to her only like a shipwrecked sailor trying to quench his thirst with salt water.

She kept so careful a guard upon herself that sometimes she was a little cold and constrained; then her love for him would enable her to forget herself entirely, and she would rise above her suffering in her attempt to cheer and amuse him.

Maurice was always gentle, always courteous; he always welcomed her; but there was the perpetual consciousness of a great gulf fixed between them, which no good wishes, no kindly feelings on either side could bridge over. He was interested

in Cecilia, he admired her, he was touched and a little amused by her enthusiasm for the cause for which he had endured so much. Perhaps to compare it with the liking of a great artist or musician for an intelligent and sympathetic amateur, would best describe the sort of feeling Maurice had for Cecilia.

One day she said to herself, bitterly: 'He never for one moment forgets that I am English.' She even fancied that sometimes he was inclined to repel her sympathy with his National aspirations.

'You are not very loyal to your own country, Miss Tremayne,' he had said, half reprovingly.

'Why should I be loyal when my country plays the hateful part of tyrant?'

'Tell me,' he went on, with that peculiarly winning smile of his, 'tell me what

first made you take an interest in the Irish national cause.'

'Simply,' she answered, 'because all my life long, my heart and soul have been with the cause of oppressed nationalities all over the world. When I was quite a little child, my hero was Kossuth, just as afterwards it was Garibaldi. I worshipped Victor Emmanuel too; I remember actually crying with joy when Venice was freed, and I did much the same when I read of the king's glorious entry into Rome.'

The cold shadow came again over Maurice's face, and the gulf between him and Cecilia seemed wider than ever.

'You must not expect me to take the same view of affairs in Italy that you do. As a Catholic, I cannot forget that the Holy Father is a prisoner.'

Cecilia crimsoned with the consciousness that she had made a terrible slip.

'I beg your pardon, I did not think of that. I remember now,' she added, with irrepressible bitterness, 'Irishmen went out to Italy to fight *against* the people.'

Maurice made no answer; and Cecilia thought that after all Englishmen were not the only people who were inconsistent where oppressed nationalities were concerned. She felt a sense of repulsion to Maurice, which was only one of the various and inevitable symptoms of her love for him.

'He is cold and narrow-minded,' thought she, 'cold to everything and everybody that is not Irish.'

But it was that certain outward coldness in his disposition which was one of his strongest attractions to Cecilia. If a man

had looked at her with eyes of tender longing, if he had whispered soft, sugared compliments in her ear, if he had ever attempted to caress her, Cecilia believed that she would have loathed him. The only man who could win her, with her pride, her enthusiasm, her passionate purity, must be the same compound of fire and ice as herself, must be a man of severe and simple life, a man of lofty aims and self-devotion to an ideal, an austere patriot, loving his country better than his home.

So a few weeks passed by, Cecilia went about her employments as usual; no one guessed what was in her heart, any more than one imagined, until the other day, what subterranean fires lay beneath the homely farms and cottages of rural Essex. At times, indeed, she looked a little pale and worn; but Mr. Tremayne found her

as ever the charming mistress of his house, who was always ready to talk to him about books and art, and even a refined and cultured sort of gossip, when he wanted to talk—and who kept unbroken silence when he was reading or writing; and, if he ever noticed that she looked sad and harassed, he remembered that her thirtieth birthday had just gone by, and, according to all conventional reckoning, her bloom ought to go with it.

He little knew what disturbing elements had come into Cecilia's life. The threatened visit to Morwell Lodge had been paid when fortunately the ex-convict was out driving with his sister; Mrs. Rivers left Mr. O'Donovan's card at the vicarage, and there was an end of the matter for the present.

Cecilia, at her friend's request, spent

part of nearly every day at Morwell Lodge.

Often she drove with them miles into the country. The purple moors, the lovely wooded valley of the river Tavy, all took a strange unearthly glow to her, as if they were bathed in the crimson light of sunset. Then, after one of these days, when Maurice seemed steadily gaining health in the perfect rest and pure air of their quiet life at Morwell, Cecilia would go home to struggle with what seemed to her to be a deadly enemy. She would often pass half the night walking up and down her room, her hands clenched together in agony.

After a time she became calm again. She had fought a good fight with this inward foe who had tried to destroy the happiness of her life, and peace came to

her at last. Maurice did not love her, would never love her.

'I am not the sort of woman that men love,' she thought. 'I know that, as surely as the sun will rise again to-morrow morning, so surely shall I never marry. But so much the better. My love for Maurice is something to be proud of, to glory in; it will never be dragged down to earth, to die out in the prosaic, and often sordid details of married life. I am glad there is this impassable gulf between us; Maurice is Irish, a devout Catholic: I am English and not even an orthodox Protestant; nothing can make marriage between us happy, or even possible. But so much the more, Maurice, hero, martyr, I love you with all my soul and strength, I shall love you for ever and ever.'

And so in time the face of that foe she

had been fighting changed to her, and she saw it was the face of an angel, strong, severe, ennobling, and uplifting. Her love widened the horizon of her life; it opened a book of experience which had hitherto been sealed to her; it led her in imagination and in sympathy through a paradise and a purgatory. She could realise now the blessedness of married lovers who had met a twin soul in each other—she could realise the tortures of those who had loved uulawfully, and who had fallen away from honour and duty into the outer darkness.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. PENROSE.

One afternoon Cecilia had been driving with Mrs. Rivers through the lanes, still with their hedgebanks luxuriant with vivid green ferns, past the Tavy murmuring over its rocky bed, and through the sombre splendour of the autumnal woods. By the time they had returned to Morwell Lodge for afternoon tea, the early dusk had fallen, and Mrs. Rivers insisted that her housekeeper should walk back with Miss Tremayne to the vicarage.

Cecilia noticed that Mrs. Penrose, as she helped her put on her fur cloak in the little entrance-hall of Morwell Lodge, was looking very pale and strange.

'I am afraid you are not well,' said Cecilia, kindly, as they went down the garden-path. 'I am so sorry you should have the trouble of walking home with me.'

Mrs. Penrose did not answer for a minute.

'I am quite well, thank you, Miss Tremayne,' she presently replied, in a low voice. 'I am very glad to be of the smallest service to you.'

They walked on together for some time in silence, then Cecilia began to talk to the housekeeper for courtesy sake.

'I think this is the first time you have been at Morwell, Mrs. Penrose?'

'No, Miss Tremayne, not the first time,' was the almost inaudible reply.

Cecilia did not pursue the subject; she had an instinct that Mrs. Penrose had some painful association with the place.

'I think you are Cornish, like myself, are you not? Your name is Cornish.'

'Yes, I belong to Cornwall.' Then Mrs. Penrose said in rather an agitated tone, as if she had taken a sudden resolution, and yet trembled at her own daring, 'I hope, Miss Tremayne, you enjoy good health?'

'Oh yes, thank you,' answered Cecilia, a little surprised at the evident anxiety with which the housekeeper asked the question.

'I—I thought you did not look very strong. Please excuse me, Miss Tremayne. And do you—do you like living at the vicarage?'

'Certainly I do,' replied Cecilia, a little coldly, beginning to think that Mrs. Penrose was a very inquisitive person, and that she should be glad when the walk was over.

No more was said for some minutes. Suddenly there was a loud clatter of a cart behind them, the horse seemed galloping at full speed, a man's voice shouted, 'Woa there—woa there!' with a storm of curses. The cart—an empty one—came thundering on, and before the two women had time to realise what had happened, and that the horse—frightened by a gleam of firelight from an open cottage door—was running away, it was close upon them.

Left to herself, Cecilia could easily have got out of the way, but Mrs. Penrose began to scream. She threw her arms round

Cecilia, and dragged her to the side of the road.

'Oh my child—my child, you'll be killed!' she shrieked; then the cart rattled past them, and finally stopped a hundred yards further on.

'Poor woman,' thought Cecilia, 'she seemed quite beside herself with terror. No cultivated person would have been such a coward.'

'I beg your pardon, Miss Tremayne,' gasped the housekeeper, trembling, and abashed, now the danger was past, 'I was afraid you would be run over. Thank God you are safe, and here is the vicarage gate; you'll excuse my coming up to the house with you?' she asked; a new anxiety seemed to possess her, and she looked ready to flee for her life when the white gate glimmered in the dusk.

'Oh certainly, Mrs. Penrose,' replied Cecilia, thankful to have no more of the housekeeper's rather embarrassing companionship. 'Good evening, and thank you for walking home with me.'

On the following day Mrs. Rivers noticed that her housekeeper was looking very pale and depressed.

'I am afraid you are not well, Mrs. Penrose,' said she.

The housekeeper started as though her nerves were out of order.

'Thank you, madam, it is nothing. It's only because I sleep so badly.'

Then she turned away hurriedly, and began folding up a gown of her mistress's.

'Well, if you do not get better, we must send you back to London,' said Mrs. Rivers, kindly.

The gown dropped from the housekeeper's hands on to the bed.

'Pray! pray, don't do that,' she implored. 'I can never leave Morwell again;' and then her voice choked suddenly, and her eyes fell.

Mrs. Rivers was a little annoyed.

'How is that? you were averse to leaving London when I first wished you to come here. Indeed, I hardly understand you. And in any case I'll want you to return with me to town when Mr. Rivers comes home.'

Mrs. Penrose, with downcast eyes, finished folding up the gown. Just as Mrs. Rivers was leaving the room she said,

'I am very sorry, madam, to seem ungrateful. You have been the kindest mistress to me, but—but I can't leave this

place any more. Come what will, I must remain here.'

'Very well,' replied Mrs. Rivers, trying to hide that she was hurt. 'I'll understand that you leave my service this day month. But have you no reason to give me?'

'I have—I have a reason!' she cried, wildly. 'Oh, Mrs. Rivers, please forgive me, you don't know what my troubles are, you never had a child yourself.'

Mrs. Rivers was touched, and startled by the anguish in the housekeeper's face.

'Have you a child then? indeed, I never knew it.'

'Oh! yes—yes, a dear and lovely child, I see her nearly every day, and my heart is almost broken with the love I have to her, and she'll never know it. I have to see her smile and be friendly with you, and everyone but me, and I am nothing

but a stranger and a servant to her.'

'Is the woman out of her senses?' thought Mrs. Rivers, in amazement.

'I don't think I can keep it to myself much longer. Will you, madam, be kind and charitable enough to listen to me and tell me what I'd better do?'

'Of course I will listen to you and do all I can to help you,' Mrs. Rivers answered, gently.

Mrs. Penrose hesitated, as if, now the moment had come for confessing her secret, she felt a little frightened. Then she said, half averting her face,

'It is Miss Tremayne, madam. You would never think it to look at her—but she is my daughter.'

Kathleen started back—pale, appalled.

'Answer me one thing before you say another word, or else keep silence for ever,'

she cried, vehemently; then, with her eyes and her voice lowered, she asked,

'Is Miss Tremayne an illegitimate child?'

'No, indeed, madam,' Mrs. Penrose held up her head proudly then, 'I have got my marriage certificate, I can show it you, I took good care to have that. But I don't wonder at your asking,' she added, sighing. 'It may seem so strange to you, but indeed, Mrs. Rivers, it's not me that has been to blame—or Miss Tremayne either. She was stolen from me, Mrs. Rivers, as much stolen as if I had been one of those poor slaves that you read about. There was a book I read over in America, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," almost everybody has read it, and people have cried many a time about the poor coloured woman, Eliza was her name, that ran away with her baby

in her arms across the floating ice, because the slave-dealers were going to take away the child. They don't remember that by the laws of this free country, as they call it, an English wife and mother as I was, has no more right to her baby than that poor slave woman in the story.'

'Come and sit down here by me,' said Mrs. Rivers, with a grave compassion, 'and tell me your whole story.'

'I must go back to the very beginning if you are so kind as to listen to me,' Mrs. Penrose's sudden excitement died away, and very meekly and sadly she took the chair which her mistress had pointed out to her.

'I was housemaid at Mrs. Tremayne's, the mother of the parson here, and of my husband. His name was Gerald, he was

some years younger than his brother, Mr. Reginald Tremayne. And he looked up to him, something as though he was a father to him. Mr. Gerald had just left college when I saw him first. Oh, dear, I thought him the most beautiful creature in the world, and he took some notice of me from the first; but he was always as polite and respectful to me as if I'd been a lady. And I was not like most of the servants around, I knew that. My father was a well-to-do farmer once, and I was sent to a good school, and was to have been trained for a schoolmistress, but my father lost a lot of money with cattle plague, and bad harvests, and one thing and another, so he had to leave his farm, and I had to go into service. It was a bitter blow to me, but I was happier than I expected to be, for Mrs. Tremayne was

a real lady and a kind mistress. She taught me a lot of useful things, and said she would make me her own maid as soon as the one she had then got married.

'But meantime Mr. Gerald came home. I think he first took notice of me one day when I was arranging flowers in the drawing-room. It all came easy to me, I loved flowers so much, but he said only an artist by nature could do as I did. I did not know what he meant, but he was an artist himself and used to paint beautifully. Another day, when I was in his study dusting his old china and things, he caught me looking at his paintings. There were trees and waterfalls and mountains he had done just like life, and he came and talked to me so nicely about them, and the foreign places he had

been to, and seemed so pleased I liked his pictures, and so sorry for me too in a way, for there was something I said that seemed to go to his heart: "It makes me sad to think of all the beautiful lands that I shall never see, and I am only a poor servant that can hardly ever get out for a country walk on a fine day, but only in the evenings when it's dark."

'And then it seems he thought I was pretty, and he used to paint my picture on the sly, so that his mother and his brother could not find it out, and we used to meet out of doors, when I did get out in the evenings. It went on like this all autumn, till he said he could never part from me again. I was very wrong to listen to him, as no good could ever come of people marrying out of their own station or of marrying by stealth as we did; still think

what a temptation it was to me, caring, as I have always done, for something nicer, and cleaner, and better mannered than what I saw in the people of my own class, and wanting to travel, and see foreign lands, and beautiful scenery as I always did. Besides, there was Mr. Gerald himself always kind, and always making the best of me, so that I seemed just like a lady to him; and think what it was to me—a poor girl, having a handsome, soft-voiced, nice-mannered gentleman making love to me, instead of the rough, masterful sort of man that I might have expected to marry! and then he was good and honourable, and asked me to be his wife from the very first.

'I gave my kind mistress, old Mrs. Tremayne, notice, feeling like the most treacherous, ungrateful wretch that ever lived, to deceive her so after all her good-

ness to me. I went back to my father for a time, my mother was dead or perhaps I should have told her all about it; then, after a bit, I pretended to have heard of another situation, and went up to London to meet Mr. Gerald. We were married quietly one morning in a church, near where he was lodging; then we went abroad. Ah, what a lovely time we had! I thought I was in heaven! But we had to come back to London, and, when we were in a dingy street, I did not like it quite so well. My husband was very kind to me still, but he had no regular work to do, and he said he was going to be a lawyer —barrister, I think they call them; but he spent most of his time idling with one thing and another. He did not even paint as much as he used to do, and in time the money began to run short. My husband

had a regular allowance from his mother, which ought to have been enough for us both to have lived on, but he was hundreds in debt before a year was over. He was never a man to have any low tastes, but he loved to go to his club, and see his friends, and to go to the opera, and all the theatres, picture-galleries, and concerts, and I think he used to play cards sometimes, and lose money over that, and then he used to buy expensive pictures and old china.

'I did not much like the life. No ladies ever came to the house, and I never saw a creature but my husband's men-friends, artists and writers, who smoked a great deal and dressed oddly, and talked a queer sort of slang. I kept out of their way, though they were civil enough to me; yet I used to fancy some of them

thought I was not properly married to my husband, and sometimes I worried myself nearly ill with the shame of it.

'Well, the time went on, and my husband got more and more out of spirits, and sometimes he was quite ugly to me—he that had such a sweet temper, naturally—for the bills kept coming in, and the tradesmen wanted their money, and there was hardly any to pay them with; so things went on until my baby Cecilia was two years old.'

Mrs. Rivers shivered; she realised at the mere mention of her friend's name the dreadful reality of the story she was hearing.

'My husband was at his wit's end for money. He had spent long ago all that his mother could spare him. The only thing he could do now, he said, was to

appeal to his brother, the parson, who was a rich man and an unmarried one. All this time Mr. Reginald Tremayne, living down here in Devonshire, had no notion that his brother Gerald had a wife in London; when the parson wanted, once a year, to go up to town, he went to a hotel and his brother saw him there—he never went near our house. Sometimes I had a dreadful fancy he guessed his brother Gerald did not live *alone;* but he would ask no questions, and just kept away from the house because he was a parson, and he thought Gerald's companion was not his wife.

'So at last, when we were in terrible straits for money, my husband concluded to tell his brother everything, and he spent almost the last pound he had to come down here to Morwell Vicarage.

He was away nearly a week; he did not write to me all the time, so that when he came back I was almost wild with anxiety to know whether Mr. Tremayne was going to help us. Ah! he *did* help us, but at what a price! it used to make me think of the old tales when people sold themselves to the devil.'

'Surely Mr. Tremayne is not as bad as that?' Mrs. Rivers exclaimed, somewhat indignantly.

'I will tell you everything, madam, and then you shall judge between us,' Mrs. Penrose went on, in the same sorrowful, helpless sort of tone, which never rose to the excitement that her mistress occasionally showed as she listened.

'When my husband came back to me, he looked very strange. I thought he was excited and in high spirits, and yet he

looked half ashamed and guilty, as though he could hardly look me straight in the face.

'He had capital news for me, he said; his brother had promised to pay all his debts and give him a fresh start in life. His mother had a coffee-plantation out in Ceylon, and he was to go out to manage it. There would be very little for him to do, and he should see a new country and a new kind of life; he was sick enough of the old one.

'"Did you tell your brother about me and the child?" said I.

'"I did," he answered, "I was obliged to," and then he coloured up and had that guilty look I told you of. "Of course he was annoyed about it, but he said you would get on very well out there."

'"And when are we to go?" I asked.

I was, like my husband, always ready to move about and see fresh countries, and I thought any place would be a pleasant change from London, I was so tired of the dismal streets, of the noise and the fog, and above all of my husband's queer kind of friends.

'"We are to be off by the next mail," he said, "and my brother will pay for our passage and our outfits."

'I was glad enough to be off. My father and mother were now both dead, and I had no relations I cared about. I loved no one in the world but my husband and my little girl; for, though my husband was an idle, extravagant sort of man, he had naturally the sweetest of tempers; and though he may have neglected me at times, and though he did the one thing I am going to tell you about which I never

can forgive, yet I believe he loved me to the last—I really believe he did.

'Well, we spent a few days in the greatest hurry and confusion, getting all the things we wanted for the voyage, and then we went down to Southampton, and got on board the steamer an hour or two before she was to start. We had two comfortable cabins, one for my husband and myself, and one which my little girl and the nurse were to share with another nurse and baby belonging to a lady on board.

'Oh, I shall never forget that evening! It was lovely weather. I sat on deck and watched the sunset, as we sailed down Southampton Water. My husband seemed very restless, sitting by me for a few minutes, then jumping up in a great hurry and walking up and down the deck.

When it got nearly dark, I went downstairs to see my little girl. I had told nurse to put her to bed as soon as we came on board; I found the nurse unpacking and arranging the child's things and her own. I looked into the little cot, expecting to see the child. It was empty. I cried out,

'"Where is the child?" The nurse stood staring at me.

'"I thought you had her. Master came and fetched her two hours ago."'

And then for the first time Mrs. Penrose seemed overwhelmed by her recollections.

'Poor soul,' murmured Mrs. Rivers, hardly breathing, with her eagerness to hear the rest of the story.

'I ran upstairs on deck again in one moment, I hardly know what I did. I ran

hither and thither calling my husband's name, a sailor helped me to look for him. I found him at last hiding in a dark corner; he looked like some guilty thief when he saw me running towards him.

'"Where's my child?" I screamed, "what have you done with her?"

'He took me by the arm and said,

'"She is all right. Come downstairs into our cabin, I will tell you about it."

'He got me downstairs easily enough, for I expected to find the child in our own berth, and he took me into the little room, shut the door, and said,

'"It is no use your making a fuss, Rachel; it is all settled and done with. The child is not on board at all, but safe and sound on land."

'When I heard that, I was just like a

tiger that had lost her cubs. I gave a great scream, I sprang at the door of the cabin—but he had firm hold of me, so that I could not get out. Then I turned upon him. I think I tried to strangle him; I don't know much about what happened. I recollect I managed to escape from the cabin at last, and went imploring the sailors to stop the steamer and let me go back to England; and then I was just going to jump overboard, but some of them caught me.

'I was ill and out of my mind for days. My story seemed to have got about amongst the passengers, and most of them —the women, at any rate—took my part, though my husband tried to make out that I had always agreed to our leaving the child behind. It was for her good—she could not stand the climate of Ceylon,

and I was only light-headed from illness and the grief of parting.'

'But what induced your husband to act in such a cruel manner?'

'It was Mr. Reginald Tremayne's doing, as I heard afterwards. He was furiously angry when my husband told him he had married his mother's servant.

'"I guessed there was a woman in the case," said he, "but I had never dreamt that you had disgraced your family by marrying her."

'For, you see, madam, that, parson as he was, he would not have minded half so much if his brother Gerald had led a poor girl like me astray; it was the marriage he thought shocking, because he was so proud of his old family name—one of the very oldest in Cornwall, I believe it is.

'"However," he said, "you have mar-

ried her, and, even if you live apart, the story will be sure to come out some day. You may not be always able to keep the woman quiet, so the best thing you can do is to take both yourself and her out of the country.

'"But," he went on to say, "I will give you a fresh start in life, on one condition. Your child, who bears the honoured name of Tremayne, shall not be brought up by a servant. Hand her over to me, and I will take care she is educated as a lady. Besides all that, a young child could not live in the climate of Ceylon."

'My husband would not hear of it at first, but Mr. Tremayne told him he must give up his child or he would never help him with another penny as long as he lived. And, if he ever had a son born to

him, he was to promise to give him up in like manner.'

'I could never have believed that Mr. Reginald Tremayne would have acted in so cruel a manner,' said Mrs. Rivers, indignantly.

'Ah, madam, the parson is a man without mercy, when his pride is touched. When my husband objected that I should never consent to give up my child, but that I should insist on remaining behind in England if she did: "Leave it all to me," said his brother, "I will manage so that your wife shall know nothing about it till it is too late for her to make any objection."

'So this is what these two men plotted, and old Mrs. Tremayne was made a fool of by them. I never knew exactly how much they told her, but it was she who got a nurse,

and sent her down to Southampton the day we sailed. My husband handed over the child to the nurse, and got them both out of the steamer, the last moment before we started, when I was thinking all the time my baby was safe downstairs in the cabin with my own nursemaid.'

Mrs. Penrose paused a moment, and seemed almost to forget the present in sorrowful memories of the past.

'And what did you do next?' Mrs. Rivers asked her, gently.

The housekeeper tried to arouse herself to tell the rest of her story.

'Well, madam, I said I would go on shore at the first place where the ship stopped, and get back to England as soon as possible. But my husband—in his dreadful fright lest I should go home again, and spoil all his brother's schemes, and make him refuse to

give him any more money—my husband got the captain to side with him, and to say I was too ill to be allowed to land; and ill enough I was, it is true. And then there was a parson who used to come talking to me, till I was almost out of my mind, saying it was my duty to obey my husband, and that he as head of the household had the sole right to decide who should bring up his child, and where she should live, he knew best what was for the child's welfare. I told him he was only a man and knew nothing about a mother's feelings, and nature was stronger and wiser than any parson, and all the animal creation showed that the child belonged to the mother, and that she had the first right to it, whatever men's laws might be. So he called me a wicked, blasphemous woman, and went away.

'I was very ill nearly all the rest of the voyage. When we landed, my first idea was to get back to England to look for my child, but I was just a prisoner from want of money to pay my passage home.

'My husband was just ugly with me; I think he was ashamed of what he had done; but all the more he tried to brazen it out, and talked about his rights, and that by the law of England he could take my children from me as soon as they were born, so that I should never see them again. I made up my mind to leave him altogether. I would go and be a servant again; there must be ladies in Ceylon who would engage me. But before I could hear of a situation my husband was taken ill of fever. I could not leave him then, as you may suppose. I stayed and nursed him

through a few dreadful weeks, and then he died. Even at the last I could not get him to do anything to help me get back my child. He said his brother would provide for her, and for me too, if he let him have her, otherwise we should both be left penniless.

'Well, I felt that life was pretty well over for me. My husband was gone, whom I had loved very dearly, though I could never forgive him for robbing me of my child. And now I was nearly destitute: I had hardly any money left when I had buried my husband.

'I was mad to think I could not get back to England, but I found kind friends, and I got a place as maid to a lady in Colombo. I stopped with her eight months, then I got a chance of going back to England, with a family who paid my pas-

sage money in return for my services to them on board.

'Well, as soon as ever I landed, I took the cars down to this place to see Mr. Tremayne the parson. He received me very coldly, told me I had been the ruin of his brother, and had driven him to his death. Still, as I was his brother's widow, he was willing to allow me two hundred a year, on condition that I went back to my maiden name, and that I never wrote to him again. As for the child, I had no legal right to her at all. He had got my husband to make a will before he left England, and to make him, Mr. Reginald Tremayne, the child's guardian, and I had no power whatever to interfere.

'It seemed such an outrageous, barbarous thing that I could not believe it, and, as soon as I left the vicarage, I went

straight to see a lawyer at Tavistock, and he told me that Mr. Tremayne was perfectly correct in all he said.

'"A father could take away a child from its mother, not only when he was living, but after his death by his will, and that, whether wife or widow, a mother had no legal right to her own child." Do you think, Mrs. Rivers, that one woman in a hundred knows how the law stands?'

'I think, if all women knew it, members of Parliament would be allowed little peace until the law was altered. In most matters women's ignorance is men's security.'

'Well, madam, I went back to the vicarage. Mr. Tremayne refused to see me again, but I was frantic, and I forced my way into his study. I tried appealing to his mercy, as he had the law on his

side. I promised that, if he would give me back my little Cecilia, I would take her away out of the country, that I would never ask him for a farthing of money, and that he should never hear of either of us again. But he was like a flint.

'"I do not mean," he said, "to allow my only brother's only child to be brought up in poverty and degradation by a servant. My brother's daughter will be treated in every respect as if she were my own."

'Then I implored him to let me see her now and then.

'"She is not here," he said, "she is abroad under my mother's care."

'I did not know whether he was speaking truth or not, but at all events I satisfied myself that my child was not at Morwell or ever had been. Then I went down to Cornwall, to Mrs. Tremayne's old home,

where I lived as servant, but the house was let to another family, and nobody could tell me exactly where Mrs. Tremayne was, except that she was somewhere on the Continent. Well, I was hopeless then, and all but penniless; for of course, madam, I scorned to take money from Mr. Reginald Tremayne. I told him I would sooner starve than accept a farthing from the man who had stolen from me my little Cecilia. There was nothing for me but to go into service again, which I did, and I was in one situation for three years. I could get no tidings of the child. I could not afford to go abroad, and seek out Mrs. Tremayne, nor could I employ a detective to make enquiries for me. You see, madam, the poor are so helpless.'

'But do you think the child was abroad all that time?'

'I had every reason to suppose so. Twice I came down to this neighbourhood to find out whether her uncle had got her with him, but she was not at the vicarage, and nobody could tell me anything about her.

'Well, about three years after my husband's death, a brother of mine, who had gone out to America long ago, wrote and told me his wife was dead, and would I come out and keep house for him? I concluded to go, for I was losing all hope of ever finding my child again, and my old love of travelling was as strong as ever. I spent many peaceful years on my brother's farm at Westonville, and lived there as his housekeeper up to the day of his death, nearly two years ago. People knew I was a widow, but I called myself by my mother's maiden name of Penrose. I was

determined to have done with the Tremaynes for good and all. My short married life seemed to have passed like a dream, and, though I never forgot my little Cecilia, I had grown pretty well reconciled to losing her.

'For after all, I thought, it was perhaps better for her to be brought up amongst gentlefolk, as she was one of them by birth. She would get a good education, and a hundred other advantages I could not give her. And I had no fear but what she would be kindly treated by the Tremaynes. My old mistress was a kind-hearted woman, and Mr. Reginald Tremayne was honourable enough in a sort of way. He said to me (I think my grief at losing my child moved even him for one moment), "I pledge my honour as a gentleman that Cecilia Tremayne shall be brought up and

treated by me precisely as if she were my own daughter." And I believe he has kept his word.'

There was silence for a minute; then Mrs. Rivers said,

'I cannot understand how it was that Mrs. Tremayne, if she was the kind-hearted woman you describe, could have acted towards another woman as she did towards you.'

'I guess she could not help herself, madam. She was a good deal ruled by her son—Mr. Reginald Tremayne; and was ready to do everything he told her. He would lead her to think that she was doing the kindest and wisest thing in the world for her grandchild by bringing her up as a lady, instead of leaving her to me. I don't blame her.'

Mrs. Penrose spoke in the patient,

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

resigned manner one often observes in the poorer classes, and which even her life in America had not wholly effaced. They have been accustomed to suffer injustice without redress, to be ridden rough-shod over by those richer and more powerful than themselves, and they come to regard it as all due to the same inevitable and gloomy fate which sends them potato blight and cattle plague; the scorching sun which smites them deadly blows in the harvest-field; the rain and snow which racks them with coughs and rheumatism; and the hated workhouse to end their days in.

'You'll remember the first time you met me, Mrs. Rivers, in the railroad-cars going to New York, and I was able to do you a trifling service which led to your talking to me. And so in the end, and

partly through Mr. Rivers knowing something of my poor brother, you engaged me as your housekeeper.'

'When did you first find out that I knew Miss Tremayne?'

'You gave me one day a letter to post, madam: "Miss Cecilia Tremayne, Morwell Vicarage, near Tavistock," was on the envelope. I nearly dropped down in the street when I read that, it brought everything back so clearly to my mind. I had concluded she was married years ago —and now to think she was living still with her uncle, and was a friend of yours!'

'But why were you so reluctant at first to come here?'

'I was afraid of seeing her. My daughter, I felt sure, must be a grand lady, proud and haughty, like all the

Tremaynes, except, indeed, my poor husband. She would be in another world to me, I thought. But when I came at last and saw her for myself, how gentle and gracious she was, when I heard how the village people spoke of her as one who was not only kind, but as courteous and considerate to them as if they were gentlefolk too, when I saw how you loved her and she loved you, then I began to feel that I could never go away from my sweet child again.

'She shall never know what I am to her: don't be afraid of that, please, Mrs. Rivers. I'll not bring a blush to her dear face to think her mother is only a servant, but I'll get a room in the village and get some needlework to do, just to keep me employed, so that I should not eat my heart out. And I'll try to content myself

with just a look at her in church, and in watching to see her go past my windows now and then. And I daresay she will come and see me, and sit and talk with me sometimes as she does with the other poor people in the place, and I shall hear her voice; I wish no better music.'

She was silent, her tale was told; she sat with her eyes fixed on the ground, in half sweet, half sorrowful musing.

Mrs. Rivers rose, and said, a little tremulously,

'I must go now, Mr. O'Donovan may want me; you will let me talk over the matter with him, and think what is best to be done both for you and for——' Mrs. Rivers hesitated a moment, she could not bring herself to say 'your daughter'—'for Cecilia. Meanwhile, I assure you that I feel very much for you; you have been—

indeed you are now—placed in the cruellest position.'

'But, ah!' thought Kathleen, as she left the room, 'though my heart is stirred by the wrong done to this poor woman, I cannot help thinking far more of the sword which her presence in this place keeps suspended over the head of my dear Cecilia.'

CHAPTER III.

A MORNING CALL.

MAURICE O'DONOVAN and his sister Kathleen were sitting in the fire-lighted drawing-room in the dusk of that afternoon. Mrs. Rivers had been telling him of the strange revelation which had just been made to her of Cecilia's birth and parentage. She was nothing to the young Irishman but his sister's friend, and a bright and entertaining companion; but his sympathetic nature was aroused to vivid interest as he listened.

'It is such a complicated situation,' said Mrs. Rivers. 'I cannot regret that Cecilia is what she is, and that she has had the education and surroundings of a lady in her uncle's home. Yet a wrong has undoubtedly been done her, by her being taken away from her mother—a wrong which perhaps is only now going to be made manifest. What a revelation it is of Mr. Reginald Tremayne's character! The country clergyman with his courtly ways and gentle voice, his love of flowers and art, and his deference to women—and then to think of him as the obdurate man, hard as a rock when his family pride is touched; a man absolutely without pity for a widowed mother. I really don't see what is to become of that poor woman.'

'What she proposes to do is simply im-

possible—to live in this village as a humble cottager, admiring her lady daughter at a reverent distance.'

'No, the part is too difficult for any mother to play.'

'Perhaps her proposing it shows that streak of romance in her disposition which no doubt, when she was young and pretty, captivated her very Bohemian husband. I think what you ought to do, Kathleen, is to put the alternative clearly before her; either let her announce herself to her daughter openly, and take the consequences whatever they may be—I fear not very cheerful ones for either of them—or else let her go back to London at once, and try to forget her daughter's existence in the future, as much as she has done in the past.'

'I am afraid that perhaps out of very

consideration for Cecilia we are inclined to be a little hard upon Mrs. Penrose. If her story be true, and at present I see no reason to doubt it—a great wrong has been done her, a wrong which can never be set right; for little happiness could come now from her daughter being restored to her, the separation between them has become so wide.'

'Is any wrong ever set quite right in this world?' asked Maurice, smiling gravely.

'Ah, no!' she replied, with a quick glance at her brother, full of deep meaning. 'If Ireland were free to-morrow, would that give you back your youth?'

'At least, dear Kathleen, I would *feel* young again. But, whatever I have given up, I have given it voluntarily, seeing my end from the beginning, whereas this poor

woman was robbed of her child against her will, and her child can no more return to her now than as if she were dead.'

'Well, I will do my best to get her to return to London. In this house she certainly can not remain. I perfectly dread seeing Cecilia while Mrs. Penrose is here. To think that we know a secret about my friend which makes me shrink from the sight of her! It shows what a false position we are placed in.'

After dinner that evening, Mrs. Rivers summoned her housekeeper to her bedroom.

'Mrs. Penrose,' she began, 'I have been seriously thinking over all you told me this morning. I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of advising you what to do. Still I cannot help believing that it would be both for your own happi-

ness and your daughter's if you could put away from you all thought of her, and try to be as content without her in the future as you have been for the last twenty years.'

'Oh, madam,' murmured the housekeeper, 'how can I be content, now I have seen her and know what she is?'

'It is very hard for you, I know. But I earnestly beg you to consider, before you take any decided step, whether your daughter is likely to be more or less happy than she is now, if she finds out you are her mother.'

'But indeed, indeed, Mrs. Rivers, I don't mean to tell her; I only ask to be let stay here, where I can see her sometimes, even though I never speak to her.'

'As long as you remain in this place,

your secret may be found out at any moment, even against your will. I do not wish to appear harsh to you—sorely tried as you have been—but I must tell you plainly I cannot take the responsibility of your remaining at Morwell. If you choose to do so, it must not be in this house. If you like to return to my house in London the day after to-morrow, I will be very pleased to keep you in my service; but, if not, we must part at once.'

Mrs. Penrose began to cry in a forlorn, helpless sort of way.

'You are not a mother, Mrs. Rivers, you can't feel for me. Oh, dear, dear, how can I go away and leave her?'

Perhaps Kathleen Rivers felt that she was a little hardly dealt with in thus having a momentous secret, affecting her

friend's whole life, thrust upon her now when she had so many of her brother's secrets to keep. Her part as regards his position was quite difficult enough to play without having to use her skill to ward off danger and sorrow from another person. But how often it happens that, when the shoulders seem almost crushed by a heavy burden, some spiteful fate comes by and heaps on another load!

However, Mrs. Rivers allowed no sign of her vexation to appear. Very gently, with all consideration for Mrs. Penrose's feelings, she yet strove her utmost for Cecilia's interest, and appealed to the mother's newly-found affection for her daughter, as a motive for not disturbing the even current of her life at Morwell Vicarage. At last the housekeeper tearfully promised to return to her place in Mrs. Rivers' house

in London; and Kathleen, breathing a little more freely, went to tell her brother that she trusted the danger to Cecilia's peace of mind had passed away.

It so happened that on that evening the Rev. Reginald Tremayne and his niece were dining at a country-house in the neighbourhood. Cecilia had the good fortune of being taken in to dinner by a well-known scientific man, who was ready to talk on the subjects which interested him, and who paid her the best compliment which a man can pay a woman—that of taking it for granted that she is a reasonable and cultivated being. Mr. Tremayne fell to the lot of a professional beauty, in a small way, who was skilled in an art more pleasing to some men than that of beauty—namely, flattery.

The vicar had come home that evening

in the best of spirits. He had met a fascinating woman who had appreciated him; he had seen his niece, arrayed in black velvet, point lace, and his grandmother's diamonds, looking worthy of his high-bred race, talking with a man, eminent in his own line, who evidently admired her as much as an old married man could be expected to do. These pleasant recollections kept Mr. Tremayne in high good humour throughout the next morning. After lunch, feeling socially inclined, and not disposed to settle to the serious task of reading the *Times*, or finishing a drawing, he proposed to his niece that they should call upon Mrs. Rivers.

Cecilia started, and turned a little pale. For a time, last evening, she had forgotten the poignant joys and sorrows of which that house was to her the centre, in the

calm and bracing air of purely intellectual pleasure. There is nothing like the study of nature, whether as artist or as scientist, to rest a mind, wearied by emotion or by political strife.

A wild thrill darted through her at the thought of seeing Maurice again; they had not met for three days. Then she trembled at the idea of the vicar meeting the released convict. The situation was full of peril, and she did her utmost in a cautious way to dissuade her uncle from the walk to Morwell Lodge.

But Reginald Tremayne was a determined man, as we have seen.

'My dear Cecilia, if Mr. O'Donovan is rather an invalid, as you say, all the more reason for the vicar of the parish calling upon him; and the fact of his being a Roman Catholic will add a certain pi-

quancy to our acquaintance. You have not neglected your friend, Mrs. Rivers, lately, I think, Cecilia?' he went on, with an arch smile which was very dreadful to his niece. 'Does Mr. O'Donovan always shut himself up in his room at Morwell Lodge?'

'I have seen him occasionally,' answered Cecilia, trying to speak in a coldly indifferent tone.

'Well, if Mr. O'Donovan is half as interesting as his sister, I shall consider him worth cultivating.'

Cecilia, effectually silenced, left the room to put on her hat, and presently she was walking beside the vicar along the road to Morwell Lodge.

She felt uneasy and anxious, and guilty of a sort of treachery. She had done her best to prevent her uncle—a magistrate,

a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England—from paying civilities to an Irish rebel, but without avail. And she could not keep him from coming into contact with what he would have looked upon with as much horror as small-pox, without falling into a lower depth of treachery—revealing her friend's secret.

It was one of those brilliant days of late autumn which are frequent in the West of England. Against a blue and cloudless sky the rocky peaks of Dartmoor rose clear and softly glowing with undefinable hues of purple, and dull gold melting into russet, and tender green, on their broad and heathery slopes. In the valleys were all the dying splendours of October. The oak-trees kindled into a rich, red brown, the withering bracken flamed brilliant orange, and the bramble-

bushes gleamed like fire. The air was keen and sweet, with a scent of dewy grass and heather and fragrant peat-smoke from village firesides.

The vicar and Miss Tremayne passed the scattered groups of white-washed cottages with the peat stacks, and the great bushes of crimson fuchsia beside the doors, and they came to the simple grey house standing in the paddock where the black-and-white cow was grazing. As they went up the garden path they saw Mrs. Rivers standing in the glass porch which served her as a tiny conservatory. The sun shone on her soft grey curls and delicate, high-bred face; she made a brilliant picture as she stood amidst the scarlet blossoms of her geraniums.

Cecilia noticed that Mrs. Rivers started as they approached, a look of embarrass-

ment passed over her face, but it was gone in an instant as she came forward with her peculiarly sweet smile to greet her visitors.

'My brother is at home,' she said, and she led the way into the drawing-room, whereupon Cecilia found an opportunity to murmur, with a glance at her uncle,

'He would come, though I did my best to dissuade him.'

Kathleen answered, still smiling,

'Oh, don't mind, my dear; Maurice has plenty of tact and can take very good care of himself.'

The ticket-of-leave-man was not in the drawing-room, and for a few minutes Mr. Tremayne enjoyed talking to his hostess, while Cecilia felt all the misery of being an unwelcome intruder, for she detected a look of alarm and uneasiness, which all

Mrs. Rivers' self-possession could not entirely hide, and Cecilia imagined it was due to a dread of the meeting between the vicar and Mr. O'Donovan. She little guessed that Kathleen's terror was connected with herself and the housekeeper, Mrs. Penrose.

At last Mrs. Rivers could bear her anxiety no longer, and she made an excuse to leave the room.

'I will call my brother, Mr. Tremayne, he cannot know that you are here;' and with that she went into the dining-room where Maurice was writing letters, and with a hurried word of explanation to her brother she rang the bell for Mrs. Penrose, and sent her on an errand to a farm-house in the opposite direction to Morwell Vicarage. Then, accompanied by Mr. O'Donovan, she returned to the drawing-room.

Cecilia's heart beat quickly as the ex-convict was introduced to her uncle, who, as though he had met a kindred spirit, beamed at the sight of the distinguished-looking young man. She was to see Maurice under a new aspect to-day. Hitherto grave and rather melancholy, though always gentle and winning in his manner, a mirthful and even mischief-loving element in his Celtic nature rose to the surface now. It was a delight to meet a well-bred and cultivated man, a delight of which he had been long deprived, which in this case he dared not seek, but which had been thrust upon him. At the same time he could not but enjoy the comic part of the situation, or deny himself the pleasure of mystifying the English aristocrat, the county magistrate, who little dreamed that he was talking to a man who two months

ago was clothed in a convict's uniform and was breaking stones beside the road.

Mr. Tremayne began by expressing his regret that they had not met before, trusted he might have the pleasure of seeing him at the vicarage, hoped he liked Morwell, and then asked him if this was his first visit to that part of the country.

'We are all of us fond of the moors, but, perhaps if you have never seen our neighbourhood before, you will think it a wild, desolate sort of country.'

'I am very well acquainted with Dartmoor,' replied Mr. O'Donovan, gravely, but with laughter in his bright blue eyes. 'In fact, I had for years a sort of official connection with the West of England—a small post under government, you know.'

The vicar was dying with curiosity to know what the post could be, but Mr.

O'Donovan immediately began talking of something else.

'And have you been in Ireland lately?' asked Mr. Tremayne. 'Sad state of things there, I am afraid.'

'Yes, I agree with you, it is a very sad state of things. But I have not been in Ireland for the last seven years.'

'Ah! like so many of your countrymen, you prefer to live in England.'

There was a bright flash in Mr. O'Donovan's eyes as he answered,

'Faith, Mr. Tremayne, your countrymen take good care that some of us *shall* live in England!'

The vicar looked at him a little doubtfully, but Maurice went on,

'From Sir Garnet Wolseley and Lord Dufferin, at one end of the social scale, down to a humble individual like myself

at the other, England finds various kinds of employment for us Irishmen. I'll visit Ireland again some day, no doubt, but I quite expect your countrymen will find some strong inducement for me to return to England, too strong for me to resist, in fact.'

'It is a pleasure in these days to meet a loyal Irishman like yourself,' replied the vicar, again beaming at him.

'I wish every Irishman held the same opinions as myself,' replied Maurice, fervently.

Then, to the relief of everyone present, Mr. Tremayne glanced at his niece, and rose to depart.

'I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at my house, Mr. O'Donovan?'

A shadow seemed to fall on the Irishman's face, and the mirthful gleam died

out of his eyes. With a stately gravity he thanked the vicar, and regretted he was unable at present to accept hospitality. He was living in strict retirement, at Morwell Lodge, having come there on account of his health, and other reasons.

For the first time in her life, Cecilia was thankful to turn away from Morwell Lodge, and her friends were equally thankful to see her go. She walked, silent and depressed, beside her uncle, who was in a very cheerful humour.

'Mr. O'Donovan is an agreeable, well-bred young man; something rather singular about him too. Pity he should be shutting himself up there like a hermit. It cannot be altogether his health. I have a shrewd guess though—I generally divine people's motives, few things escape *me*.'

Cecilia felt a thrill of alarm, but she did not rate her uncle's penetration quite so highly as he did himself.

'Depend upon it, my dear, he is about to enter a monastery. He gives me the idea, with all his good breeding, of a man who has lived apart from the world. There is something—I hardly know how to describe it—something lonely and isolated about him; I should say, too, that he had been through a great deal of suffering. Has Mrs. Rivers told you much of her brother's past history?'

Cecilia was becoming thoroughly uncomfortable. She could have said to her uncle—as children do in their game of 'hide and seek'—'you burn;' at all events, her own cheeks did.

'I think Mrs. Rivers has seen very little

of him the last few years,' was all she could think of as a reply.

'The monastic shadow is certainly creeping over him already;' and the vicar smiled archly. 'I noticed that you and he did not exchange one word of conversation. Does he *never* speak to you when you meet him, my dear?'

'He does sometimes,' answered Cecilia, feeling that her uncle was getting past endurance,

In her effort to speak calmly, her tone sounded almost contemptuous, and Mr. Tremayne gave a little laugh.

'I never before saw a young lady so indifferent to the society of the opposite sex as yourself. I am inclined to flatter myself that I am the only man you care to talk to.'

'You are almost the only man I know worth talking to;' and Cecilia turned to him her sweetest smile—a smile of relief as well as of affection—relief that he was so far astray, and guessed neither what Maurice was—nor what he was to her.

'If I return in exact terms that compliment, you would not accept it as such. To compliment your sex as a whole is what you like best, Cecilia.'

'To be sure I do, uncle,' she answered.

'Then you are most unjust to men, my dear;' whereat they both laughed, and so, the best of friends, they proceeded homewards, and no more was said about the alarming subject of Mr. O'Donovan.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SWORD FALLS.

As Mr. Tremayne and his niece entered the vicarage grounds, Cecilia's tame robin suddenly dropped from a branch overhead to her feet, like a brown and golden autumn leaf. She stopped to talk to him, and to throw him some of the crumbs of biscuit which she always kept in her pocket for his benefit. The vicar sauntered on; he turned a corner of his drive, and then and there he came face to face with his dead brother's widow.

He recognised her in an instant, and he started back with an awful terror, as if he had met one risen from the dead. She looked frightened and confused also, but more with the embarrassment of a person caught trespassing. Mrs. Penrose said something almost inaudible, some sort of apology, and was about to hurry past him.

But then Mr. Tremayne remembered that Cecilia was following him, and that in another moment the mother and daughter would meet. He put out his arm as if to arrest the housekeeper, and demanded, in a voice that was hoarse and unlike his own,

'How dare you—what right have you to come here—what do you mean by it?'

'I am doing no harm, sir. I am going

away for good to-morrow; I just wanted one last look of Miss Tremayne's home.' The housekeeper stood still in the path, and trembled.

'Then go—go instantly! No, not that way, woman!' Mr. Tremayne almost shrieked at her, for now Cecilia was close at hand. Hardly knowing what he did, in his terror, he laid his hand on Mrs. Penrose's shoulder, and gave her a slight push in the direction of the house, with a frantic hope that Cecilia might not see her.

Mrs. Penrose, scared by the vicar's unexpected roughness, gave a little cry. She saw her daughter hastening towards her, and she held out her hands to her as if for protection.

'Oh, my dear—my dear!'

'What is the matter—what are you

doing, uncle?' Cecilia was amazed and indignant at beholding the courteous vicar apparently laying violent hands upon a frightened-looking elderly woman, whom she recognised as Mrs. Rivers' housekeeper.

Mr. Tremayne released Mrs. Penrose, with a sort of bitter laugh of disgust and defeat. He knew it was all over then—the long concealment of Cecilia's parentage, the secret which he had kept for more than a quarter-of-a-century—all was at an end. In another moment the story would be told.

His first impulse was to walk on to the house, and leave the mother and daughter alone together; he would not witness his niece's humiliation. But Cecilia's indignant eyes arrested him. He was not going to shrink away from her, as if he

were ashamed of himself; aud the next moment he had quite recovered his dignity.

'Cecilia, my dear, this person is annoying and intrusive. You will oblige me by going indoors and taking no notice of her.'

Cecilia was too confounded by her uncle's conduct to reply to him. Her attention was absorbed by Mrs. Penrose, who, trembling and deadly pale, looked about to faint. She put her arm round the housekeeper.

'Lean on me, Mrs. Penrose, there is a seat close by, let me help you to it.'

She managed to support the poor woman for a few steps, until they reached a rustic garden-seat; there she assisted her to rest. Then, turning to Mr. Tremayne, who was standing still in the path,

regarding her with a helpless look, she said,

'I think, uncle, the best thing you can do is to go to the house and send one of the servants here with a glass of wine. I am afraid Mrs. Penrose will faint.'

Mr. Tremayne shrugged his shoulders, and gave an upward glance with his eyes.

'Good heavens! these women—these women! What is to be done?' and then he went to the house as he was bid, feeling that he was being placed in a most undignified position, forced—at peril of appearing perfectly brutal in Cecilia's eyes if he refused—to attend upon his low-born sister-in-law.

When Mrs. Penrose found herself alone with her daughter, supported by her

gentle arm, and freed from the alarming presence of the vicar, she began to revive.

'My dear, my dear,' she murmured, 'you are just lovely to me. I can't go away and leave you, and never see your sweet face again;' and with that she took Cecilia's hand in her own and began to kiss it.

Cecilia tried instinctively to draw it away, she could not help recoiling from this familiarity on the part of the housekeeper. She began to feel very uneasy. There was something strange beneath all this—the vicar's sudden violence, Mrs. Penrose's unwelcome demonstrations of affection. Was the poor woman mad? With relief she saw her uncle returning from the house carefully carrying a glass of sherry in his hand. He looked annoy-

ed, perturbed, and as if struggling to keep up his dignity in untoward circumstances. He had returned himself with the wine; it was not to be thought of that either of the servants should witness this painful scene. He had not a doubt that the secret had been told during the few minutes he had left the mother and daughter together—as he came towards them he had seen the elder woman fondling Cecilia's hand, and Cecilia shrinking away from her with a look of perplexity and distrust.

'Here is the wine,' said Mr. Tremayne, 'and now, for heaven's sake, my good woman, drink it up, and then go back where you came from—wherever that may be—as quickly as possible. You know very well that neither I nor my niece wish to have anything more to do with you.

Cecilia, my love, I will protect you from further annoyance; now go back to the house, and leave me to deal with her.'

'I am going, sir;' and the housekeeper rose feebly, trying to check a sob. 'I promised Mrs. Rivers I would go back to London to-morrow.'

'Mrs. Rivers, what does she know about you?' asked Mr. Tremayne, sharply, alarmed lest his charming friend at Morwell Lodge should know anything of his family skeleton.

'Why, uncle, don't you know? she is Mrs. Rivers' housekeeper,' said Cecilia, more bewildered than ever; the scene was becoming to her like a puzzling dream.

'I promised Mrs. Rivers,' repeated the housekeeper, 'she knows all about me.'

'She knows all about you—she knows all about the disgrace you have brought

upon us!' and Mr. Tremayne gave a sort of cry of rage. 'Cecilia, how will you ever look your friend in the face again?'

'Disgrace, uncle! What do you mean? I am not disgraced, thank you.'

'Not disgraced, do you say, *with that woman for your mother?*'

There was a moment of awful silence. Cecilia stood quite still; she felt stunned and deafened, as if a cannon had been fired off close to her ear.

'Did you say—' she asked at last, very slowly, in a changed and unnaturally quiet voice—'did you say that Mrs. Penrose is my mother?'

The vicar did not answer; he only gazed at his niece with growing horror and self-reproach, as it dawned upon him what it was that he had done. 'Oh, good God!' he groaned, 'I have told her myself!' To

have kept the secret so long and so successfully, and then—by one of those sudden, unaccountable blunders into which sometimes even the cleverest people fall—to have been betrayed by his own lips!

Mrs. Penrose was timidly plucking at her daughter's gown.

'Don't mind, don't mind, dear Miss Tremayne, I will go away to-morrow and never trouble you again.'

Cecilia turned from her; she was sick and shuddering with a nameless horror.

'How does she come to be my mother?' she asked her uncle, in the same strained and hollow voice.

'She was your father's wife—my brother's wife,' Mr. Tremayne answered, quickly. All confounded as he was, he yet divined the possibility of Cecilia's fears leading her into a dreadful error,

and he was anxious to spare her a moment more of shame than she was forced to bear.

'Oh, thank God!' With a deep-drawn sigh, Cecilia dropped into the garden-seat and hid her face with her hands for a minute. Then with white and trembling lips, and a wild and piteous smile, she turned to Mrs. Penrose and said,

'I beg your pardon, if you really are my mother. I suppose it is all true?' and she gave her uncle one imploring look, an appeal for mercy.

He began pacing up and down the drive as if in utter despair; then suddenly he paused and turned fiercely on the housekeeper, who was gazing at her daughter with the dumb and wistful longing of an affectionate dog.

'Now you have done all the harm you

can do, and I shall be obliged by your leaving this place at once—at once, do you hear me? If you have the smallest consideration for Miss Tremayne, you must know that she can have nothing more to do with you—you belong altogether to different classes in society. Now go, my good woman, go at once.'

'I am going, sir,' she replied, meekly. 'Good-bye, dear Miss Tremayne, it's all for the best. I know you could never have cared for me.'

But Cecilia started up.

'No, you must not go; if you really are my mother, you must not go—Oh, why did no one tell me before? why did you keep me in ignorance if you knew who she was?' and again she turned passionately upon her uncle.

'Come back with me to the house,

Cecilia, and I will explain everything, but let this—this person go home now.' The vicar tried to soothe his niece, but he felt almost beside himself.

'She must come with us.' Cecilia laid her hand on her mother's arm, and drew her gently towards her. 'I cannot let her go away again, now I know who she is.'

'She *cannot* come with us, Cecilia.' Mr. Tremayne's irritation got the better of him then. 'You tell me she is Mrs. Rivers' housekeeper. You cannot interfere with another lady's servants.'

Cecilia's eyes fell, the blood rushed back into her pale cheeks, and Mrs. Penrose said, hurriedly,

'Yes, indeed, sir, I must go back to Morwell Lodge, there is Mrs. Rivers' dinner to see after, and she will be wondering where I am.'

'There, you hear, you hear, Cecilia!' cried her uncle, with a mingled triumph and disgust. '*Now* will you let her go?'

Cecilia raised her proud head again, and looked at her mother very gently.

'If I let you go now, will you promise to let me see you to-morrow morning? You will not, I beg you, leave Morwell before I have seen you again?'

'I won't—indeed, I won't, dear Miss Tremayne. God bless you for speaking so kindly to me, my child.' She burst into tears, and then, with her handkerchief up to her eyes, she turned away and hurried down the drive, until she had disappeared amongst the evergreens.

'Now, Cecilia, come home with me.' The vicar felt himself once more master of his house and grounds, now that the spectre of his past life had again vanished

out of sight. He took his niece's arm, as if she were part of his property, and led her towards the house, and then into the drawing-room.

'Now, my dear,' he said, carefully closing the door, and pointing to a sofa, 'try to recover yourself, and don't let this unfortunate affair trouble you any further.'

But Cecilia had quite recovered herself already. It was a calm and thoughtful face which she lifted to look at the vicar, as he stood on the hearthrug, facing her, with his back to the fire, feeling himself a man again.

'Tell me, uncle—who was my mother before she married my father?'

'My dear girl, what is the good of worrying yourself about it? Why try to recall old stories which are much better forgotten? Let the matter rest.'

'Well,' she replied, in the same quiet, measured tone, 'I shall ask my mother to-morrow.'

Mr. Tremayne turned round impatiently and poked the fire.

'Perhaps my telling Cecilia now,' thought he, 'will be the surest means of preventing her from wishing to see her mother again. My dear,' he said, keeping his face averted from his niece, 'I warn you against inquiring further; still, if you will have it, I must tell you that your mother was then what she is now—a servant. She was, in fact, my mother's housemaid.'

Cecilia kept silence for several minutes. Mr. Tremayne, growing very uneasy, looked round at his niece.

'Don't vex yourself about it, my dear,' he said, tenderly. 'I have known it all the time, but it has never made any

difference to me. Nothing can alter the fact that you are a Tremayne—my brother Gerald's child.'

'But I am my mother's child just as much.'

'Yes—yes, of course; but the law does not consider you as such, and society will not, either.'

'And more than all, I am myself.'

Cecilia's thoughts seemed to move slowly, as though she had been stunned and the current of life had not yet regained its usual speed. After another pause she asked,

'What became of my mother when my father died?'

The vicar looked down, and pushed the hearthrug with the point of his boot.

'Your father died in Ceylon, as you know. Your mother came back to Eng-

land for a year or two and then, as I understand, she went to America to live with a brother of hers. My impression was that she had been dead for some considerable time.'

'And I—where was I in those early years?'

'Your parents, when they went out to Ceylon, left you in the care of my mother.'

'Then did not my mother return to me after my father's death?'

'Your mother went to America, as I have just told you.' Mr. Tremayne felt both hot and cold, as unconscious Cecilia thus touched upon the dangerous spots in his past life. 'You lived with your grandmother until she died, and then you came here, my dear, to your own home, to be like your uncle's own daughter;' and

he smiled, but Cecilia did not respond.

'My mother seems to have forsaken me,' she said, in a low, pained tone.

'And was it not all for the best, my dear?'

'I do not know that.'

Mr. Tremayne's face fell, and Cecilia felt that she was speaking coldly and ungraciously to her uncle—but 'I cannot help it,' she thought, and she rose and left the room.

CHAPTER V.

WAR IS DECLARED.

Amidst Cecilia's mingled and confused emotions, the strongest was a sense of having been kept in the dark.

'They all knew it, even Kathleen Rivers,' she thought, bitterly, 'yet they did not tell me; and I have discovered the truth by the merest accident.'

When she went to her pretty, fire-lighted bed-room, with the candles in the tall, brass candlesticks lighted ready for her use, she—without waiting to take off

her hat and cloak—sat down to her writing-table, and penned a hasty note to her friend.

'Dear Kathleen,

'I have seen Mrs. Penrose, and I know everything. It appears that you found out who she was before I did. Will you kindly allow me to see her at your house to-morrow, and appoint any hour most convenient to yourself.

'Ever yours,

'Cecilia Tremayne.'

She fancied when the note was written that there was something stiff and even ill-humoured about its tone—just as when she was talking with her uncle in the drawing-room, she had a dull sense that something of grace and dignity had gone

from her life. But she could not force herself to write the note again; she rang the bell, and despatched it to Morwell Lodge, bidding the messenger wait for an answer.

She was sitting brooding over the fire, not attempting to dress for dinner, when Mrs. Rivers' reply was brought to her. There were signs of haste in the note, the handwriting was tremulous, and slightly blotted.

'DEAREST CECILIA,

'If you will come to Morwell Lodge to-morrow morning at any hour between eleven and half-past one, you will be able to see Mrs. Penrose undisturbed. Maurice and I are going for a long drive, and I am sending the two servants to Tavistock shopping. Mrs. Pen-

rose will no doubt explain to you how it was that she spoke to me first. You know I could have no right to tell her history, until she gave me leave to do so.

'Always, dear Cecilia,

'Your loving friend,

'KATHLEEN.'

Cecilia smiled sadly over this letter; her bruised and ruffled spirit felt the Irishwoman's delicate tact and sympathy in every line.

She began hurriedly to change her gown: some undefined feeling made her choose one of the plainest in her wardrobe—it was a black satin which fell round her in severely simple folds—and round her neck she placed an old-fashioned kerchief of India muslin. She did not wear an ornament or a flower.

'I look now more as my mother's daughter ought to look,' thought she.

Yet when she entered the dining-room, and took her place at the head of the table—the vicar, glancing at his niece, with her pale face and composed and somewhat haughty manner—thought she had never looked more thorough-bred.

'Let her mother be whom she may, she is a true Tremayne,' thought the vicar.

The uncle and niece kept up a little trivial and conventional talk during dinner. But all the time Cecilia was conscious of a burning sense of humiliation and wrong. The remembrance would come again and again—as she noticed in a way she had never done before, the massive heirloom plate on the table and on the sideboard, the antique diamond-cut glass, the costly

wines, the china bowls of hot-house flowers, all softly lighted by shaded wax-candles—the remembrance came to her that she had breathed in luxury and refinement as her native air, and all the while, the mother who had borne her was a servant, a woman of the people. Surely she, Cecilia, had been an impostor all her life.

Not another word was said about Mrs. Penrose that night. The vicar and his niece spent the evening, as they often did, in perfect silence, each in an armchair beside the fire, absorbed—or apparently so—in a book or a newspaper.

At breakfast next morning Mr. Tremayne looked slightly uneasy. He wondered what Cecilia's next move would be, yet he shrank with a sort of guilty fear from asking her.

However, she had not the slightest wish to keep him in ignorance. As she rose from the breakfast-table, she said, very calmly,

'I am now going to see my mother. Mrs. Rivers has very kindly placed her house at our disposal this morning. She and Mr. O'Donovan and the servants will all be out.'

'My dear Cecilia,' said Mr. Tremayne, in a much more authoritative tone than he was in the habit of speaking to his niece, but his dread of her meeting her mother again made him feel inclined to detain Cecilia in the house by force. 'You must allow me to say that you are not acting with your usual good sense in this matter. You are deliberately placing yourself in an unpleasant and undignified position. What good can come of your

seeing this—this person, from whom you have been separated ever since you were an infant? In such circumstances the tie of blood becomes a mere superstition. Of course you wish for—for Mrs. Penrose's welfare, so do I, but all these matters are so much better settled through a third person—the family lawyer, whom one naturally takes into confidence in delicate affairs of this kind.'

'What message could a lawyer take from me to my mother?' asked Cecilia, with a cold smile.

'The message would come from me more properly,' replied the vicar, with a dignified air. 'I intend to renew my offer of settling an allowance on my brother's widow. She refused it before, but it is my wish that she shall be provided for respectably, and set above the

degrading need of earning her livelihood. She must not remain a day longer in Mrs. Rivers' service. I must go to Tavistock this morning and see Desborough, and talk over this unpleasant affair with him;' and Mr. Tremayne began to pace up and down the room, as if to work off a feeling of annoyance.

Then he paused and said,

'I am surprised that you, Cecilia, with your fastidious self-respect, should think of going to Morwell Lodge to-day—the house where your mother is a servant. It is a sort of letting yourself down which is very unlike you, my dear.'

'I think my self-respect would suffer more if I refused to go,' answered Cecilia, proudly.

'And supposing I forbid you?'

He turned sharply on his niece,

a sudden fire flashed from his eyes.

'Don't do that, uncle! Your forbidding me to see my mother will make no difference in my actions towards her; though it will make a great difference in my feelings towards you!'

Not another word passed between them. Mr. Tremayne went on pacing up and down, and Cecilia left the room. But each felt that war had been declared, although actual conflict might not follow immediately.

Cecilia, in extreme simplicity of attire, a plain brown ulster and brown felt hat, hurried along the road, trying by rapid movement to stifle emotion. She presently looked up, and saw Morwell Lodge before her, white and shining in the morning sun, against the grave purple of the moors.

A rush of mingled feelings then almost overwhelmed her. That commonplace house was destined, in various ways, to exert a tremendous influence over her whole life. Never again could she see it, or even recall it to her memory, without feeling as though a two-edged sword pierced her heart. Her mother was forgotten; and one wild, unreasoning cry rose to her lips—'Maurice will never care for me now!'

Mrs. Penrose—or, to give her her due name and title, Mrs. Gerald Tremayne—a refined-looking and lady-like figure in her black silk gown, and silvery grey hair beneath her white net cap, came to the door to meet her daughter. Her gentle face was quivering with a timid uncertainty as to her reception, and she fixed her soft

brown eyes on Cecilia, with a wistful, dog-like look of humble love.

Cecilia felt an unexpected glow at her heart; and with a tender thrill which almost surprised herself, she took her mother's hand in both her own, and kissed her cheek.

'Oh, my dear—my dear, how good you are to me! It is just lovely of you to come this morning,' murmured the elder woman. 'Mrs. Rivers said we might go into the drawing-room; we shall have it all to ourselves, there is nobody around.'

'Mrs. Rivers is very kind,' replied Cecilia, a little absently, as they entered.

The morning sun and the sweet, fresh air from the moors streamed in through the open window. A bright fire blazed on the low hearth, and the blue china bowls were heaped with bronze and golden

chrysanthemums. But to Cecilia the pretty room looked forlorn and ghastly in its unwonted emptiness.

It was a bitter fore-taste of the dark days to come, when Morwell Lodge would be once more shut up and tenantless.

'Maurice—Maurice, shall I never see you again?'

She listened, with but half her mind at first, whilst her mother told the history of her early married life. Cecilia could think of little but the vivid associations of the room; for there was Maurice's arm-chair, and the wicker-work rack where he kept the *Freeman's Journal* of that week, and there were his very pen and writing-case. She listened with but half her mind, until all at once she awoke to the fact that her mother, in a perfectly gentle voice, was telling her some-

thing that was astounding and horrifying.

'Do you mean to say that my uncle did *that*, and my father allowed it to be done?' asked Cecilia, her eyes dilating, her face growing pale.

'Yes, my dear; they stole you away from me, they took you from your mother, just as they steal children in countries where there are slaves.'

'I could never have believed in Uncle Reginald doing such a barbarous thing!'

'Ask him, my dear; ask your uncle, and he will own to it, and be proud of it; he did it for your good, he will say, and you know the law upheld him and your father in doing it.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Cecilia, 'what an atrocity! And I never knew it until this moment! Mother,' and she turned to Mrs. Tremayne, her face glow-

ing with passion and with pity, 'mother, what can I do to atone to you for all you have suffered?'

'My child—my child, only love me a little, and don't despise me—love me a little, my elegant daughter, that I am so proud of——'

Cecilia threw her arms round her mother's neck, and laid her head down on her mother's shoulder. Mrs. Tremayne shed tears abundantly; but Cecilia's eyes were dry and burning, and she felt on fire with shame and indignation.

This, then, was the story of her early years. This was the meaning of her uncle's care of her, a fatherless child! Tender and generous to her Mr. Tremayne had been, no doubt; but what was the worth of his tenderness when he had treated her mother with cruelty and per-

fidy? He had brought up Cecilia as his own daughter—yes, but only to gratify his family pride, to rescue a Tremayne from the contamination of a low-born mother.

'And I have loved him like a daughter, I have lived in ease and luxury; and all the while my mother—my wronged and betrayed mother—was humbly toiling as a servant, ignorant if I was even living.'

'Dear child,' said Mrs. Tremayne, softly caressing her daughter's hand, 'dear child, may I call you Cecilia?'

'To be sure you may, mother;' and the daughter smiled, in the midst of her bitter emotions, at her mother's simplicity. 'And now tell me some more about yourself, and where you have been living all these years.'

When Mrs. Tremayne's story was finished, Cecilia sat silently pondering for a few minutes; then she said,

'Mother, neither I nor anyone else can ever make up to you for all you suffered on my account. But what I mean now to do is to try to make your future life a little brighter. You must, of course, leave Mrs. Rivers' house. Tell me where you would like to live?'

Mrs. Tremayne looked a little perplexed.

'Some place where I can see you sometimes; that is all I care about.'

'And I fancy you would not wish to be too near my uncle. What do you say to taking a little house at Tavistock? I could come and see you very often.' Cecilia hesitated a moment; then she

added: 'My uncle tells me he wishes to make you an allowance.'

A pretty pink flush, a look of gently offended dignity came into Mrs. Tremayne's face.

'Oh, my dear, I could not take money from Mr. Reginald Tremayne; I should feel as though I had sold my child to him, and so I told him years ago. No, indeed, I would rather go on being in service to the day of my death. But I have a little secret to tell you, dear,'—she paused, then added her daughter's name with a little smile of pride—'dear Cecilia. Well, my poor brother managed to save a considerable sum of money, and he left it all to me; I have between sixteen and seventeen thousand dollars of his, which I put into the English funds along with a few savings of my own—that kind gentleman,

Mr. Rivers, managed it all for me. I meant not to touch any of it, as long as I had health and strength to go on working, but to save it up against my old age. For you know, my dear, I have been so used to lead an active life at Westonville (that's where my brother's farm was) that I should be quite wisht if I had nothing to do; so if I leave service I must try to find some sort of work, and something that will bring me in a little money, and now I have found you, my dear, I want to have something to leave you when I die—something to make you quite independent of your uncle. One never knows, with a man like him, with his stubborn temper and that awful pride of his—one never knows what may happen. Some day he may get mad with you, and turn you out of his house.'

'It is not impossible,' replied Cecilia,

calmly. Something in the vicar's face that morning had already warned her that she was on the edge of a precipice. 'But, mother, do not think about me just now. I have a little money like yourself. My grandmother, old Mrs. Tremayne, left me a hundred and fifty a year. I am more thankful than I can say, that we are both provided for, independently of my uncle. If you can find some way of adding to your little income, so much the better. But—ah, dear—here we come to that eternal puzzle—how *is* a woman to earn money?'

Cecilia found to her relief, when she returned to the vicarage, that Mr. Tremayne had gone to Tavistock, leaving a message for her that he should dine at the Bedford Hotel, and not return until the last train. Feeling stunned and bewilder-

ed by all she had gone through, she resolved to pass away the afternoon in gardening, which was to her a never-failing solace.

'I can defy black care when I have a hoe or rake in my hand,' she used to say. 'A blessed stupor comes over my mind whenever I am digging or pruning or pulling up weeds.'

She looked very charming in her broad straw hat, flowered apron, and gauntlet gloves, as she stood, her face flushed with fresh air and exercise, tying up a great sheaf of pink chrysanthemums; her faithful robin hopping about her as she worked. The level sunlight of the October afternoon glowed on the glossy evergreens, and turned the leaves of the waning elms and beeches into gold and flame. Just as the sun was sinking in a flood of mellow misty

light over the distant Cornish moors, Cecilia heard footsteps, and, looking up, she saw Mrs. Rivers.

Cecilia threw down her garden trowel, and went across the lawn to meet her friend. Never had she been more glad to see Kathleen; hitherto Cecilia had given her boundless sympathy, now it was her turn to ask for that priceless gift, which is like the 'precious oil poured out which filled the house with fragrance,' and which is worth much more than mere 'money given to the poor.'

Mrs. Rivers held out both hands to Cecilia, with that Celtic impulsiveness which sometimes got the better of her ordinary 'society' air.

'Cecilia, mavourneen, how I have been thinking of you! You have gained so much and lost so much since I saw you

last. You have lost your perfect peace of mind, your perfect content with your charming home and your charming uncle —is not that so? And you have gained the sweetest, gentlest mother—Cecilia, I have such a respect and affection for her, I hardly know how to give her up to you.'

Cecilia smiled gratefully at her friend, but said little in reply. Perhaps she felt inclined to quote one of her mother's little Americanisms and say to Kathleen, 'You are just lovely to me.'

She linked her arm in Kathleen's and walked with her into the house.

'You will stay a little while with me? I was feeling in rather low spirits this afternoon.'

'You ought to be happy, Cecilia. Your mere existence has given the greatest joy

imaginable to another human being. For your mother is the happiest woman in the world, she tells me. She fairly cried with joy about you when I saw her this afternoon. I believe she is going to Tavistock to-morrow to try to find rooms for herself. That is her present idea, to live in lodgings in the neighbourhood where you can come and see her sometimes. All the same,' Mrs. Rivers added, gravely, 'I know that your newly-found relationship will bring you plenty of troubles and anxieties.'

'Yes,' answered Cecilia, with a sigh, 'it is delightful no doubt to be loved in that unreasoning way, which I have done nothing to deserve, and better still to know that, as you say, my being in existence makes some one else happier. But one must look at it all the way round. There

is an old saying, "Love is enough;" it is very pretty and poetical, but it is not practically true. I cannot help seeing the confusion and complexity which has come into my life. Out of consideration to my uncle, if I am to go on living at the vicarage, I must conceal my mother's existence from the world in general; and yet there will be something degrading—at least something wanting in dignity and openness—if I have to visit her in secret. Once my life was simple enough, now it will be full of petty mysteries and evasions; and I shall be harassed day by day by conflicting claims and interests.'

'Mr. Tremayne is the great difficulty, I see that,' said Mrs. Rivers, looking very anxious.

'Such a difficulty that I actually dread our next meeting, and I am thankful to

have the respite of one day. Perhaps this is the last peaceful day I shall have—who knows? Something in my uncle's face this morning made me feel as if a storm were in the air.'

'Come to me to-morrow morning and tell me all that has happened. Indeed, we must make the most of the short time we have together. Maurice has made up his mind to go back to London next week; he says he is tired of being idle.'

An iron hand seemed to clutch Cecilia's heart. She involuntarily put up her hand to her throat, she could hardly breathe.

'This, then, is the end,' she thought. 'Something told me to-day the end was near.'

'I am grieved to leave you just now, Cecilia, in all this trouble and anxiety which has just come upon you—but what can I

do? My first thought must be Maurice. I tell my husband that when he comes home (and by-the-by, he sails to-morrow from New York) he will find himself a person of very secondary consideration with me. When a man has suffered as Maurice has done, his nearest relations cannot help feeling that they live only to serve him.'

Cecilia smiled, with a strange pale look of enthusiasm and pain. Kathleen had no need to excuse herself to her for any mark of devotion to her brother.

'You must come and stay with us in London soon after the New Year,' was Mrs. Rivers' parting remark. 'I fear you may not see much of Maurice, as he talks of going to America in the early spring; still, you know, if he is away, I shall have much more time at your disposal.'

And, so well had Cecilia guarded her secret, Mrs. Rivers really believed that she would prefer visiting at her house in town when Mr. O'Donovan was away, because then Mrs. Rivers would be free to devote herself to her guest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VICAR'S ULTIMATUM.

It was with nerves braced up to meet a vague yet real and pressing danger, that Cecilia met Mr. Tremayne the following morning. The vicar greeted his niece with his usual courtesy, but his manner was grave and cold, as if he wished to impress her with a sense of his displeasure. They lingered over breakfast, though they spoke little to each other, and uttered only a few commonplace remarks from time to

time. Perhaps each dreaded beginning the serious and momentous discussion which nevertheless was inevitable—conscious that their relations to each other might never be the same afterwards.

At last, the fatal moment could no longer be delayed. Mr. Tremayne stood up pale and stately.

'Cecilia, my dear, I have something to say to you. Let us go into my study; we shall be undisturbed there.'

The study, as might be supposed from the vicar's cultured tastes, was a delightful room. Its prevailing hues were rich and dusky; there were Persian rugs on the dark polished floor, and Persian jars and platters of glowing red were its chief ornaments. There were lounging chairs of various sorts covered with dull red morocco, a book-case filled with choice

editions in sumptuous bindings. An easel, with an exquisite water-colour drawing of Mr. Tremayne's, stood by the window, and paints and brushes were ranged neatly on a carved oak stand close by. The window, as befitted the room of an artist, looked due north, and to make up for the sun's absence a fire blazed on the tiled hearth nearly all the year round.

The vicar pushed an arm-chair towards the fire for his niece, and then seated himself in another.

'Now, Cecilia,' he began, resting his elbows on the arms of the chair and folding his white hands together—'I must tell you that yesterday I had a long talk with my lawyer, Mr. Desborough, and I wrote a letter from his office to your mother, making her a definite proposition. Here is a copy of the letter; you

will see from it what are my wishes on the subject;' and he took from his pocket-book a folded sheet of paper, which he handed to Cecilia.

'MRS. GERALD TREMAYNE,

'I shall be happy to settle upon you two hundred pounds per annum: on consideration that you at once remove to a distant part of the country, and that you hold no communication of any sort with any member of my family.

'REGINALD TREMAYNE.'

The vicar steadily regarded his niece as she read this letter. A crimson flush rose to Cecilia's forehead, but she returned the paper to Mr. Tremayne without a word. Perhaps she could not trust her-

self to speak at first. She was beginning to feel that Mrs. Gerald Tremayne was nearly related to her, and that an insult to her mother was an insult to herself.

'Well, Cecilia,' at last said the vicar, with that hard gaze which was becoming a downright frown.

'I do not think my mother will accept your terms,' replied Cecilia, in a low but firm voice, looking straight before her into the fire.

'And what is your reason for thinking so?'

'She told me yesterday that she had already refused to take money from you, and that she should do so again. She refused to sell her child, she said. For I find, uncle,' and now Cecilia raised her eyes, and looked at the vicar with a pale,

proud, steadfast face, 'I find that my mother did not voluntarily give me up, as I first imagined. I find that my father and you took me away from her without her knowledge, and against her will. I find that after my father's death she begged you to restore me—her only child—to her, a widow—and you refused. No, I do *not* think she will take money from you.'

Mr. Tremayne flinched for just a second, as Cecilia spoke—but he recovered himself instantly.

It was in a superior and slightly sarcastic tone that he replied,

'Naturally, my dear, you judge this matter like a woman—an emotional, illogical woman. Fortunately for you, I was able to see a little further into the future than your poor uneducated mother

—a mere creature of impulse and instinct, as women of that sort always are. I was able to rescue you from degrading surroundings; for, at your father's death, you would have sunk down to your mother's level, and have been brought up amongst the lower classes. You have been saved from this; you have been bred and educated as a gentlewoman, as a Tremayne—simply because I had the sense to stand firm, to consider your true welfare, instead of yielding to your mother's entreaties.'

Cecilia remained silent, and the vicar rose, and stood facing her on the hearthrug with his back to the fire.

'You are not quite yourself to-day, my dear: you seem to me to be rather silly, and—must I say it?—a little ungrateful. However, the world will do me justice. I

have retrieved my unfortunate brother's error, I have upheld our family name from being dragged into the mire. That is—so far. Take care, Cecilia—' and his voice took suddenly a tone of stern warning—'take care that you do not undo my work; take care that *you* do not bring disgrace upon the name of Tremayne.'

Cecilia rose as he said this, and returned her uncle's menacing look with a sort of flame in her eyes. They stood facing each other in an ominous silence, every moment the situation was growing more strained, each carefully weighed looks and words, conscious that a crisis in their lives was at hand.

Mr. Tremayne went on,

'I wish to tell you that what I and your father did, the law upheld us in doing. Your father had a legal right to decide

where, and by whom you should be brought up; he had a legal right to take you away from your mother—either, as he did, in your infancy, or at any other time during your minority. And that right did not cease at his death. By his will, he appointed me as your guardian, and as your guardian I succeeded to the right of separating you from your mother. Probably you are not aware of this.'

'Yes, I know what the law is, and that a mother has no more legal right to her child than a hired nurse has,' answered Cecilia, in a voice thrilling with passionate emotion. 'And, when all women know this, they will demand to have some share in making the laws which they are forced to obey.'

'Oh, good heavens!' and the vicar shrugged his shoulders and cast up his

eyes with a look of despair, 'and now she is beginning to talk about women's rights. It is the worst taste in the world, for a lady to express a decided opinion on any political or legal matter.'

Cecilia was resolved for once to speak out to her uncle all that was in her mind.

'You say that women should be concerned only with household matters; and yet you would deny them any power in the household, any legal right to their children!'

'Yes,' Mr. Tremayne went on, in the same hopeless tone, 'an hour or so's contact with that—that person, my unhappy brother's widow—and you have become another woman, my poor Cecilia.'

'No, uncle, I am what I always have been. I know and feel that I am a woman

of the people—just as truly as I am a Tremayne.'

A flash of rage and even hatred—not directed at Cecilia, but at a vision of the hated 'lower orders' which her words had suggested to him—a flash of hatred darted out of the vicar's eyes. Then his face, that refined, artistic face, grew very cold and hard.

Cecilia's faculties were strung up to their highest pitch, and a stray thought crossed her mind—as incongruous thoughts often do in moments of intense excitement. Her uncle was like some of the people of Southern Europe, cultured, fastidious, sensitive to all beauty in nature and art, full of exquisite tastes and sensibilities—and at the same time, cruel, vindictive, without mercy or remorse, hard as the

nether millstone. But herein she did him injustice.

'Let us drop this unpleasant and unprofitable discussion, and come to the point,' said Mr. Tremayne, recovering his usual composure. 'You know the proposition I have made to your mother. Whether she accepts it or not, you know what my wishes are. I shall expect you to carry them out.'

'If my mother agrees to go away and never see me again, I shall not have a word to say against it. But if she refuses to give me up, then I refuse to give her up.'

Cecilia, as she said this, was white to the lips; but she spoke in a calm, clear tone, and her eyes frankly, fearlessly met her uncle's. He, looking at her, felt that in strength of will he had met his match.

There was a minute of dreadful silence, when neither of the two combatants seemed to breathe.

'Cecilia—' and all at once Reginald Tremayne's voice trembled, but it was only for a moment, and he went on firmly—'Cecilia, I have looked upon you as my daughter for the last five-and-twenty years; now, almost for the first time, I lay a father's commands upon you. If you continue to live under my roof, you must give me your solemn promise that you will never again see, or speak or write to the woman who is unhappily, your mother. Either that promise, or—you leave this house for ever. This is my *ultimatum.* No, do not answer me now. We may, both of us, be led on to say things we shall regret afterwards. I shall not mention the subject again until to-morrow morning.

Then I shall expect your final decision.'

He turned away, as if to signify that the interview was ended, and Cecilia, with a firm and steady step, left the study and ascended the stairs to her bed-room.

Then her strength seemed suddenly to give way. She dropped, almost fainting, into a chair.

'I knew it!' she thought wildly. 'I saw from the very beginning how it would be. This is the end—the end of my life—the end of everything I care for and hope for.'

CHAPTER VII.

NO ALTERNATIVE.

After the intense excitement Cecilia had gone through, for an hour or two she remained in a state of collapse of her nervous energies. At last a sudden thought aroused her. She would seek her mother, she would learn her fate from her mother's lips. Perhaps after all there was a chance that she would accept the vicar's terms, and set her free.

Cecilia had not walked more than a few

yards from the vicarage gate, when she saw her mother hastening down the road towards her, and she remembered she had talked of going to Tavistock this morning. Mrs. Tremayne had just the absorbed and hurried air of a person anxious to be in good time for a train.

When she raised her eyes and saw her daughter approaching, such a rapture lighted up her delicate, care-worn face that Cecilia's heart gave one great throb, and then sank down like lead.

'My last chance is gone,' she thought, 'my mother will never consent to give me up.'

'My dear—my dear, and were you coming to see me?' so Mrs. Tremayne panted forth her greeting, overcome with the joy of this unexpected meeting, yet harassed by the claims of that exacting train which she felt sure was not far off,

and had its eye upon her. 'I was going to take the cars for Tavistock, but it does not matter.'

'You have half-an-hour before the next train is due. I will walk to St. Stephen's station with you, mother.'

Proud and joyful, Mrs. Tremayne walked for the first time by her daughter's side.

'You look just elegant,' she murmured, presently, with an admiring glance at Cecilia.

The daughter hardly knew whether or not it was an advantage that the mother talked of the 'dêpot' and the 'cars,' and trusted she might get back to Morwell Lodge before 'sundown.' Perhaps the further Mrs. Tremayne was removed, by speech and accent, from the ordinary middle-class Englishwoman the better.

'I want to talk to you, mother. Tell me, first, have you had a letter from my uncle?'

Mrs. Tremayne coloured a little, and held up her head with modest dignity.

'Yes, I have; and I have just mailed my answer to him.'

'And what did you say?' asked Cecilia, her heart beating quickly.

'Why, my dear, what should I say? Do you think now I have found you, my sweet daughter, that I would go away and never see you any more? No, not if he offered me a thousand a year to do it.'

'Yes, I thought so,' replied Cecilia, under her breath; and then she did not speak for several minutes.

They had reached the little railway-station, which lay in a deep ravine of the

moorlands. The bracken, all bronze and golden, and the faded heather, grew down close to the railway on the one hand, and on the other were woods of pine-trees, their rich and solemn verdure mingled with flaming beeches. There was a seat of iron-work on the platform beside the station-master's garden, where still bloomed stocks, pansies, and geraniums—and there that calm and mild October day, with the air scented by mignonette, the mother and daughter awaited the yet distant train.

'Mother,'—and Cecilia turned towards her, trying to smile with lips that quivered a little—'mother, you must either take me or leave me. If you will not give me up entirely, you will have me on your hands altogether.'

'Oh, why? Do tell——' and a con-

fused and wondering joy began to dawn in Mrs. Tremayne's face.

'My uncle has placed before me very much the same alternative that he has placed before you. If I am ever to see you again, I must find a home elsewhere than at Morwell Vicarage.'

'But, my dear, I should never think of coming to your uncle's house to see you. I would never intrude myself at the vicarage. All I ask is that you would come and see me sometimes at Tavistock.'

'Mother, don't you see?' Cecilia went on, very gently; she could hardly bring herself to tell Mrs. Tremayne the vicar's alternative—it seemed too harsh; yet all the while Cecilia had a hope, unconfessed even to herself, that when Mrs. Tremayne knew the whole truth she would refuse to

come between her daughter and the man who had been like a father to her, even though he had wrongfully usurped that place. 'Mother, don't you see? We cannot meet at all, if I am still to live with my uncle. Tell me, would you not soon forget me, and be perfectly happy, if you were to go away to another part of the country and never see me again?'

Cecilia paused for her mother's answer in a tumult of conflicting feelings. She knew that if her mother consented to give her up, if she now lost this unexpected, unsought-for affection which had come into her life, there would be a blank, a sense of loss, which would make the world never quite the same to her as before. How haunted she would be by this gentle placid old face, with the soft grey hair; how the soft brown, dog-like eyes would

ever seem gazing at her with a wistful unsatisfied yearning!

'Cecilia, my child,' came the mother's answer, in a tender agitated tone; 'how could I be happy without you, now I know you, what you are?'

'Well, then,' Cecilia's face had grown very pale, but she still tried to smile and speak playfully, 'what do you think of our living together in a little house somewhere? We shall be very poor, we must live very humbly, perhaps we may be able to earn a little money by hard work of some sort.'

'I think it would be just heaven!' Mrs. Tremayne looked up, her face beamed, and she clasped her hands together with a little sigh of joy.

There was a long silence after that. Cecilia felt that there was nothing more to

be said. Her question was answered.

The faint rumble of the expected train was heard from afar, a few passengers, the station-master and a porter or two, were moving about the platform; then Cecilia rose, and said in a somewhat strained voice, as if she were holding herself under a strong control,

'Come, my dear mother, it is useless for you to go to Tavistock now. You and I must look much further away for our home, and we will go together. Come back with me to Morwell Lodge. I must see Mrs. Rivers.'

Mrs. Tremayne obeyed her daughter without a word. Cecilia gave her her arm as they ascended the hilly road from the station; but hardly another word was spoken on the way to Morwell Lodge. Mrs. Tremayne was trembling with joy at

the prospect of a home with her daughter, as if she had seen a beautiful vision; still there was something just then about Cecilia which awed her mother into silence.

She was a little afraid of this tall, fair, stately young gentlewoman, who, by some strange freak of nature, was the housekeeper's daughter.

'To think I should have lost my child all these years—to find her again like this! But ah—after all, I would rather have had again the baby they stole from me,' thought Mrs. Tremayne, perplexed by feeling that her daughter was her own and yet not her own; her very flesh and blood, and yet as remote from her own ways and thoughts as if she were alien in blood and race.

It seemed like a dream to the house-

keeper that she had ever called Cecilia daughter—when she saw Mrs. Rivers come forth to greet her friend. Mrs. Tremayne had just then a most potent influence over her child's destiny, and yet she humbly retreated, her very existence forgotten for the moment, into the inferior regions of Morwell Lodge.

Mrs. Rivers drew Cecilia upstairs to her bed-room, and they sat down by the fireside, Kathleen holding her friend's hand, and looking with tender anxiety into her face.

Cecilia began, very calmly,

'You were right, Kathleen, you clearly foresaw the danger ahead. I think I vaguely guessed it from the beginning. My uncle, who took me away from my mother when I was a baby, is not the man to undo his work after all these years. He

is what he was nearly thirty years ago, when he refused to give me back to her.'

'But, Cecilia, he cannot now interfere with your personal freedom.'

'No, certainly he cannot. He leaves me free to choose one of two alternatives. Either I give him my solemn promise never again to see, or to hold any communication with my mother, or I leave his house for ever.

'Oh, my dear Cecilia!' cried Kathleen, in anguish, 'this is far worse than I feared!'

'Is it really? Do you not think we had every reason to expect that my uncle would make what he would call a firm stand for the honour and credit of his family? It is rather painful to him, no doubt; but "*noblesse oblige*," you know.'

'And what will you do?'

'Ah—I have to say "*noblesse oblige*," too.

in my own way. My mother has just declined my uncle's offer of an allowance of two hundred a year, because it was coupled with the condition that she and I should never meet again. Can I do less than she has done?'

'Then is there no hope, no escape in any other way for you?'

'None. I said that I was free to choose, but the fact is, I am not. Nobody is really free. There are some things morally impossible. I *cannot* accept my uncle's condition, when my mother will not.'

'You see how it is, Kathleen,' Cecilia went on, after a few minutes' silence, 'if I give up my mother now, I endorse, I agree to, my uncle's act, when he took me away from her in my childhood. More than that, I bring upon her a fresh loss, a fresh robbery of her daughter. She has seen

me again, she has built new hopes upon me, she tells me she loves me. And all the while—' here a cry of passionate revolt seemed to break through Cecilia's calm tones—' all the while, it is my uncle I love, and not my mother! How can I love her, when I never knew her until the other day, when we have spent all our lives apart, and have not a thought, not an idea in common? Whilst my uncle—you know how happy we have been together in our everyday lives, with all our tastes and habits in sympathy, though we may be widely different in our opinions. It is my uncle, and my home, and everything I care for—friends and society and refinement and art and travelling—I must give up, to live a narrow, sordid, poverty-stricken life!'

Cecilia ceased abruptly; she had to put a strong restraint upon herself, or she

would have burst into tears. Kathleen was weeping silently, and the two women sat by the fire for a time, without saying another word.

Then Cecilia went on, very quietly,

'After all, my caring for my uncle so much more than I do for my mother, proves only what an injury has been done her. If I had never been taken away from her, I might have been contented with her now, contented with her life and her surroundings. When a wrong has been done, somebody has always to pay the penalty of it; and it often happens that it is somebody like myself, who was in no way responsible for the original wrong.'

Mrs. Rivers thought bitterly,

'I wish I had died before I had brought Mrs. Penrose back from America! It seems to me that it is *I* who am some-

how responsible for Cecilia's sufferings!'

She said presently, in a half-stifled voice,

'Cecilia, you must come and stay with me. Your uncle will relent in time.'

'No, he will never relent; he is ready not only to sacrifice me, but himself also, to his family pride. Thank you, dear Kathleen, for all your goodness to me, but it is better that I should face my new life at once. I must settle my mother comfortably in a little house somewhere. She would have been contented enough if I had come to see her now and then, she would never have gone to the vicarage. But this would not have contented my uncle, you see.'

'And it all seems such a useless sacrifice! Who will be the better for it?'

'Kathleen,' answered Cecilia, in a low

and earnest voice, not looking at her friend as she spoke, 'your brother Maurice had once a harder choice to make than mine. It might have seemed kinder to his friends, and a truer service to his country, if he had fled to America when he was free to do so. It might have been wise and sensible to save himself; but he felt it was simply—impossible. My prison awaits me, Kathleen. I hope I shall go to it as bravely as he did.'

The Irishwoman was silenced, and soon afterwards the two friends parted, with one mute and passionate embrace.

'You will come again before we part?' asked Kathleen; and Cecilia replied,

'I will come to-morrow. Then everything will be at an end between my uncle and myself.'

She went towards home, feeling as

though every step of the road, with its myriad associations, gave her agony. It was the bitterness of death to look, almost for the last time, at Morwell Lodge, where she had passed hours of keen and vivid emotion. All her ambitions were over, all her hopes that the day might come when she too might work and suffer for the national cause so near her heart—that long dreamt-of, long planned-for visit to Ireland would probably never happen now. And her love of a far later date, that passion for Maurice O'Donovan, which had come as a crown to her love for his country, that would soon be a dream of the night—visionary, hopeless, mournful.

But not only these loftier memories; the homely recollections of the lonely cottages she passed on her road, combined

to make her way that day through a very valley of the shadow of death. Beneath those humble roofs Cecilia, with her courtesy, her sympathy, had ever met a hearty welcome. All her life she had spent amongst them, she had tried to serve them, and now they must do as they could without her.

'I know now,' and a sudden thought made her eyes kindle with a proud triumph amidst her pain, 'I know now why it was always so easy for me to make friends with these poor struggling, toiling folk. In my veins flows the blood of these people who have to bear up the world and its burdens on their shoulders. All that I am suffering now comes from my kinship to them, and because I am trying to be true to that kinship. I used to pride myself on being a democrat, the

time is come for me to put my professions into practice.'

She walked on, suffering acutely, but holding up her head with a calm and unshaken courage; until she came to the white gate of the vicarage grounds. Her tame robin, espying her from afar, came flying through the trees, and perched on the gate-post as she entered, his breast like a little coal of fire, his bright black eyes regarding her intently. Then Cecilia gave a sob.

'I must leave you too, my Robin!' and her tears fell fast, as she scattered crumbs for the bird.

Mr. Tremayne was in excellent spirits when he met his niece at dinner that evening. He felt that he had acted with the soundest judgment in clearly placing before her that no compromise with the

accursed thing—low birth and breeding—was possible for her.

'Now she finds that I am determined to allow no sentimental, and more or less secret association with that miserable woman, my unfortunate brother's widow, Cecilia will at once gracefully give way, and will feel grateful to me for putting an end, without loss of time, to an intolerable and degrading situation. But, even if that were not so, the mere statement of what would follow her disobedience to my will, would be enough to ensure her compliance. To lose her income, all but a paltry hundred and fifty pounds a year, to lose her home, her position in society, the mere thought of it is enough! There is nothing like putting a thing plainly sometimes, and Cecilia has plenty of common sense.'

He glanced across the table at his niece with a proud and pious sense of being a sort of Providence to her.

'What I have saved my dear girl from! and *twice* in her life too!'

Cecilia was determined that that evening, perhaps the last that she should ever spend with her uncle, should be as pleasant to him as possible. She wore a gown which he had always admired, a rich silk, in colour like the dark sea-blue that one sees in old Venetian glass, and round her shapely throat were rows upon rows of large honey-yellow amber beads.

The dinner exactly suited the vicar's fastidious taste; choice fish and game and entrées, nothing heavy and commonplace in the way of joints and puddings. And Cecilia had filled afresh the old china bowls with roses, which gave the table a

dainty air, and refined the prosaic business of eating.

Cecilia looked at her uncle, and thought with a sigh, that she should never see again such a dignified and beautiful picture as he made that evening. The soft light fell on his silver hair, and the green velvet of the window curtains made a dark background for his refined and high-bred features, which looked more than ever like an ivory carving. His black coat and white tie were a sort of compromise between evening dress, and the clerical uniform which he disliked. There was something about him of the country squire of ancient pedigree, and also of the courtly man-of-the-world Monseigneur of the Roman Catholic church.

After dinner, while Mr. Tremayne was sitting over his wine, which consisted of one

glass of old and costly Madeira—and Cecilia was alone in the drawing-room, brooding over her profoundly melancholy thoughts—the door-bell rang, and presently Clive and Lina Marsden entered.

Their arrival made Cecilia start with pleasure, which presently gave place to an acute pang, as she remembered that from these friends as well as from her uncle and her home—she was about to part. She had almost forgotten the existence of the Marsdens in the rush and hurry of events during the last few days, but usually not a week passed without Clive and Lina, or one of them, spending an evening with Cecilia.

It was her ambition to make Morwell Vicarage a desired haven to these young people, where they might find peace when they were much harassed at home, and

where they might find also a certain amount of quiet amusement. Cecilia took care that there was always a plentiful store of tempting magazines and papers about the vicarage; there might be seen the *Graphic* and the *Portfolio*, Harper's and Scribner's magazines, Caldecott's and Kate Greenway's picture-books, and choice prints and etchings in profusion. And in return, the boy and girl brought a breath of freshness into the somewhat grave and monotonous quietude of the vicarage.

Clive and Lina thought this evening one of the most delightful they had ever spent. Cecilia had never looked more handsome, or talked more brillantly; they did not know it was a fever of mental excitement which gave the brightness and bloom to her face, and made wit and merri-

ment flash from her lips. After tea, she appealed to Mr. Tremayne.

'Uncle, let us go into your study and look through your drawings once more.'

The vicar, with a benevolent and beaming face, led the way into his sanctum, turned up the lamp which was burning dimly on the table, lighted candles on the mantelpiece, arranged chairs before the easel so that the two ladies might see the drawings to advantage, and allowed Clive to ransack his portfolios and unearth old and almost forgotten treasures.

Mr. Tremayne had not only exquisite taste, but—for an amateur—a considerable amount of technical skill. He was touched by Clive's enthusiasm, which was that of a boy whose passion for art was seldom gratified, and who, if he lacked the culture which comes from study of the masters,

had not by it been made fastidious.

'Really,' thought Mr. Tremayne, as Clive went into raptures over one of the vicar's most successful landscapes—a level yellow gleam of stormy sunset over a long sweep of purple moorland, with a few grey boulders of granite and a shallow pool reflecting the sky—'Really, I think even I had hardly appreciated this boy as he deserves. I should like to see more of him. What a tall fellow you are growing,' he said aloud. 'I suppose you will be going out into the world soon. Are you thinking of making art your profession?'

Clive's face clouded over, and his eyes fell.

'I only wish I could. It is the only thing I care for. But my father will not hear of it.'

'Oh, that is a pity.' Mr. Tremayne thought to himself, with all an old bach-

elor's scorn for the blunders of parents. 'What a fool Marsden is—he has no notion how to bring up his children. His eldest daughter has disgraced herself, and now he is thwarting his only son in his decided vocation in life. Well, Clive,' he said, 'come and look over my drawings whenever you like, and if there is anything I can teach you in the way of art I shall be very glad to do it.'

Clive's face brightened again with a sudden joy and gratitude, which made Mr. Tremayne resolve inwardly:

'I will do what I can for this boy, and if he should turn out to be a genius it would do credit to my discrimination,' was the thought which passed half unconsciously through the vicar's mind.

When the young Marsdens went away, saying they had had an 'awfully jolly'

evening, Cecilia threw a little, white, fluffy shawl over her head, and walked with them down the long drive to the gateway of the vicarage. A full moon, high in the sky, shed a flood of silver lustre through the waning foliage, white like snow, and shadows like delicate lace-work lay across the path.

Cecilia was anxious to know, before she bid her friends good-night, all that they could tell her of their future hopes and prospects. Perhaps she should never see again this boy and girl, who had made much of the happiness of her past life.

'Have you decided anything yet, Lina?'

'Yes, so far as I can. I shall be one-and-twenty next May, you know, and I shall take a situation in a girls' High School as soon afterwards as I can get it.'

'You will have an awful row at home to go through first, Lina,' said Clive, with a shrug of his shoulders.

'I know that,' she answered, tranquilly. 'I am afraid I shall be considered as much a disgrace to my family as poor Harriet is. But it can't be helped. After all, our lives belong to ourselves, and to no one else, and we must do the best we can with them. The barbarous days are over when the lives of all members of the family were at the mercy of the head of it. But the idea seems still to survive.'

'Have you seen your sister since her marriage?' Cecilia ventured to ask.

'Well, such strict paternal injunctions have been issued, that I have not ventured to call upon her yet. I have been hoping to meet her accidentally in the village, but I have only seen her once or twice,

driving with her husband, and she just nodded to me and that was all. I did not think she looked very happy, poor girl.'

'Don't let us talk about it,' said Clive, who had by no means become reconciled to the thought of his brother-in-law.

'And you, Clive, have you any plans for the future?' and Cecilia laid her hand on the boy's thin arm.

'Well, considering that I have no strength, no brains, and no money—I think the situation I am best fitted for is a grave in St. Stephen's churchyard,' he replied, with a bitter laugh.

Cecilia did not answer with an arch tenderness, as she would have done a week ago, 'How we should all miss you if you were there!' for such words from her now would be only a mockery; she herself

would soon be dead and buried to all her friends at Morwell and St. Stephen's. She only leant a little more heavily on Clive's arm and said, in a low voice,

'I have something to tell you both. I am going away very soon for a long time; perhaps for ever.'

Clive stood still with an inarticulate cry of dismay, but Cecilia added,

'You have never heard me speak of my mother, I think. Some time ago she came back from America, where she has been living for several years. I am going to live with her for the future.'

'Oh, Cecilia, Cecilia, what shall we do without you? There will be nothing to live for when you are gone!' were the words uttered despairingly by the brother and sister.

'Don't say anything more—don't make

it harder for me than it is!' so she prayed them, trembling a little.

'Then you don't *wish* to go?' replied Clive, defiantly; and he would have poured forth a torrent of inquiries and expostulations, but she stopped him with hand outstretched appealingly.

'*Wish* to go? God knows I do not! There, there, good-bye—come and see my uncle when I have gone—I think he will be a little lonely,'—her voice broke, she tore herself away and went back to the house, leaving Clive and Lina standing in the road, speechless with grief and amazement.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST APPEAL.

The morning came, which to Cecilia, after a sleepless night, dawned grey and chill and awful, as though it were the morning of the day on which she was doomed to die.

But just as no condemned criminal ever loses, until his latest breath, the dim hope that a reprieve may yet reach him, so Cecilia was conscious of a vague, unreasoning belief that her uncle would relent at the last moment. With what a bright

smile he had spoken to her last evening; how tenderly he had wished her good-night! Was it possible that the man, who only a few hours ago had looked at her with a father's love and pride in his eyes, would that morning thrust her out of his house?

Mr. Tremayne greeted her as kindly as ever. He seemed in excellent spirits, yet Cecilia, knowing him as she did, could once or twice detect a tremor in his voice as he talked, and—with an unheard-of clumsiness for the vicar—he dropped his spoon as he was handing her his cup for some more coffee.

Then suddenly when breakfast was over he rose and walked to the fireplace.

'Cecilia, my dear, I am going to Exeter this morning. Before I go I must just say one word to you. I dislike extremely

alluding again to this unpleasant subject, still I trust it is for the last time, and that henceforth it may be entirely buried and forgotten. Cecilia,' and then he drew himself up a little, and his tone became hard and cold, 'I must ask you to give me that promise I spoke of yesterday.'

Cecilia had also risen from the table; she now stood confronting Mr. Tremayne, her face was very pale, her hands were tightly clasped in each other.

'Uncle,' she replied, in a low, but clear and resolute tone, 'my mother and I are ready to do what we can to please you. She will undertake never to come to Morwell again, never to intrude upon you in any way. She will be contented if I visit her and write to her occasionally. But that is the very least I can do. I

must refuse to give that promise you ask of me.'

There was an awful silence. The vicar stood, his eyes fixed upon Cecilia, his face growing grey and hard as a stone.

'You prefer that woman to me, do you?' he said at last; and the words seemed forced through his clenched teeth.

'No, I do not!' Cecilia's answer was like a cry of anguish. 'But—she is my mother.'

Then he abruptly turned his back on his niece, rested his arm on the mantelpiece, and stood looking down into the fire.

Reginald Tremayne was nearly threescore and ten, but the glowing Celtic blood often retains much of the passion and the freshness of youth right on to old age. Had he not been emphatically a gentle-

man, with all the habits and traditions which are second nature, he might have turned on his adopted daughter and struck her to the ground, in return for the deadly blow which she seemed to have aimed at his heart. For a few minutes he was almost beside himself with rage, with disappointment, with wounded pride and affection; but no word, no sound escaped him. The haughty vicar, the county dignitary, the representative of an ancient family had been defeated, humiliated, but he bore it in silence—the only possible way, he thought, when it was a woman who had done it.

Cecilia came a few steps towards him, trembling violently, holding out her hands.

'Oh, uncle, speak to me!' she cried, in a faint voice, making her last appeal, but he

took no notice of her. For one moment her will, her whole soul were yielded up to him; yet the strength of the resolution she had made, not to give up her mother, was not expended; it still held her, as with a force outside herself.

At last he turned, and confronted her again. He looked like an old man in reality now, his face seemed to have grown white and haggard and shrunken in those few minutes. He spoke as if he were a little out of breath, otherwise his voice was as firm as ever.

'There is nothing more to be said. We will have no mockery of leave-taking. I am going to Exeter by the next train, I shall not return until to-morrow evening. When I return, I shall expect—' then for one instant his voice faltered, but he went on resolutely— 'I shall expect to find you

gone. I have nothing more to say.' And he walked steadily across the room without looking at her again.

Cecilia stood without moving or speaking. It was like a dreadful dream; she saw all she cared for most in life vanishing from her, and yet she was powerless to prevent it.

At the door the vicar suddenly paused, and then some of his pent-up passion burst forth.

'Cecilia, my child for more than twenty years, I ask only that you will obey me as your father, and you will not! But whenever you change your mind—whenever you are ready to give me that promise, come back to me; my home will be always open to you——'

Then, abruptly, as if he dared not trust himself longer in her presence or he might

have broken down utterly in some wild outburst of wrath and tenderness, he went out and shut the door.

The day passed on. Cecilia was numbed and stupefied by all she had gone through; she scarcely suffered at all as she made all the needful arrangements for her departure on the following morning.

She had to collect her various belongings throughout the house. Her uncle's various gifts to her from time to time she knew he would wish her to carry away with her—all but the family treasures which had belonged to his mother and grandmother; these certainly must not be degraded by belonging any more to one who had deliberately descended from the station of the Tremaynes to cast in her lot with the people. Cecilia made a package of the diamonds,

some other antique jewellery, and some miniatures and point lace; she sealed it carefully and placed it on Mr. Tremayne's dressing-table.

And now she must go for the last time to Morwell Lodge to make the final arrangements with her mother, to bid farewell to Kathleen Rivers and—to Maurice O'Donovan.

Mrs. Rivers, Cecilia, and Mrs. Tremayne had together a very calm and business-like talk. Cecilia was almost indifferent whither she went on the morrow, but it was settled at last that she and her mother should spend the coming winter in lodgings at Penzance. It was Mrs. Tremayne's native place, and she timidly expressed a longing to see it again.

'But I have not a relation left in the

world, so you need not fear meeting anyone whom you would rather not know, my dear,' she said to her daughter.

The presence of her mother seemed to give Cecilia strength to go through the parting with her friend. It was impossible to allow any token of her grief to become visible when Mrs. Tremayne's face was radiant with joy at the thought of spending the whole winter with her daughter.

Mrs. Rivers, indeed, felt very bitter against her late housekeeper. The latter could not, or would not, realise the sacrifice which Cecilia was making for her sake.

'I don't mean to take her away for long, indeed, Mrs. Rivers. It is just a visit she is going to pay me; if she will only stop with me a month or so, indeed I will try to be satisfied. I shall make

her as comfortable and happy as ever I can, and she shall have a real good time at Penzance all winter. Certainly, it is only natural she should like to be with her mother; who could love her as I do?' and she looked adoringly at Cecilia, who sat with her eyes cast down and her pale lips compressed.

Mrs. Rivers thought that the old saying which Cecilia had quoted the other day, 'Love is enough,' might be made to cover plenty of that soft selfishness which is often a component part of parental affection. The daughter might sacrifice everything, the mother would not know that she had made any sacrifice at all, for 'Love is enough,' and she loved Cecilia with all her heart. Still Mrs. Tremayne had the grace to add,

'Of course, Mrs. Rivers, I know the

difference between Cecilia and me. She is a real lady, and I am only a working woman, and I don't wish to take her away from all her friends here, and her uncle, if she wants to go back to him, though I guess she won't, now she knows how cruelly he has behaved.'

'It seems such a terrible waste,' thought Mrs. Rivers afterwards. 'Cecilia is throwing away her life just as Maurice did. Yet could I wish either of them to have acted otherwise? They would have been less than themselves if they had. They have followed not duty merely, but something loftier, less definable, but not less precious. Duty is like the solid rock beneath our feet, but honour—which calls Cecilia, which once called Maurice—is more like the life-giving air we breathe. If it were not for those whom the world calls

utopians, sentimentalists, fanatics, the moral atmosphere would lose its oxygen, and the human race would die stifled.'

And now the two faithful friends clasped hands for the final parting.

'Maurice is out,' said Mrs. Rivers, in a low and troubled tone. 'He did not know you were coming, but he will be home very soon. Cannot you stay a little longer?'

'No, I must go. It is better as it is,' replied Cecilia, in a choking voice; then, with one convulsive pressure of Kathleen's hand, she hurried out of the house and down the garden-path, and so out into the road, without daring to look back.

Then she stood still and put up both hands to her forehead. Her brain seemed turning.

'I think I am going mad,' she said, aloud.

An instinct of self-preservation led her to turn away from the vicarage, to seek in physical exertion some relief from her acute mental tension. She walked in desperate haste some miles along the moorland road. The pure air blew softly on her fevered forehead. The wild and desolate scene around her, the boundless expanse of dun and purple hills, the rugged granite tors lifting themselves to the low grey clouds, the subdued light of the autumn afternoon, the very loneliness of the place, in time brought calmness to her.

Nature, silent, free, untamed by the hand of man as she is in these Dartmoor solitudes, seemed to speak peace to the soul which loved her so passionately.

Cecilia walked on for miles, and in time she found herself descending a steep

and stony lane which led down to the river Tavy.

There was a little wooden bridge on which she stood for a few minutes, looking on the scene, well-known, long-beloved, which she should see no more. On either side rose lofty hills, the more distant a grave purple, whilst near at hand the dying bracken, the fading beech-trees flamed gold and crimson, even the rushes wore a brilliant hue in their autumnal decay. The river rushed swiftly past, with a murmuring rippling sound; clear coffee-brown over its gleaming, pebbly bed, flashing into light where it broke against the smooth grey boulders. The shores of the stream were fringed with sad-coloured alders and willows; but on one mountain ash there glowed clusters of berries like sparks of fire, its branches drooped low

into the water, and the current gently swayed them to and fro as it swept onward.

Cecilia stood on the bridge for some little time. The silent, lonely melancholy of the place seemed to pass into her fevered blood, and to still her wildly throbbing heart.

'The everlasting hills will stand, the river will go flowing on, when I am dead and forgotten—' that old thought, so common to the human race, floated through her mind. 'Why do we toil and trouble ourselves? we are only the straws and the faded leaves drifted downwards by the current to the sea. "The wind passeth over them, and they are gone, and the place thereof knoweth them no more."'

Footsteps near her made her look round. As she did so, her heart gave one wild

bound—then the calm of emotion at its highest pitch came over her, and nerved her for what she felt would be one of the supreme moments of her life.

She saw Maurice O'Donovan coming towards her down the rugged lane—she saw his tall figure, his pale, eager, sensitive face. He was to her a hero and martyr, the man who had suffered hardships and indignities such as she could scarcely even imagine, whom she loved with all the passion of a pure and ardent nature which had never loved before. What were her sorrows to his? he who had passed seven years of his youth in penal servitude.

For one moment she looked at him—the man she should never see again—with her whole soul in her eyes. Then pride, and the inevitable soreness which comes from

unreciprocated love, made her imagine that he had sought to avoid her that day, and she was about to pass him with a silent bow.

But he, with a rush of gladness in his face at the unexpected meeting, held out his hand to her.

'Miss Tremayne,' he said, in a tone of deep emotion, 'is it true that you are going to leave Morwell?' and he retained her hand in his as he spoke.

'Quite true,' she answered, in a low voice, her eyes falling before his intense gaze.

They were both silent for a moment, he let her hand fall gently, and Cecilia turned away a little, and stood, tightly clasping her fingers round the hand-rail of the bridge, her eyes fixed on the darkly flowing water beneath.

Maurice knew by instinct, what his sister had never discovered with all her keen wits. He knew that Cecilia loved him; and he knew also that she saw, as clearly as he did, that the gulf between them was impassable. But he could at least give her affection, reverence, sympathy, in exchange for her passionate devotion.

In a voice low, thrilling, strangely sweet to Cecilia's ear, he said,

'May a man like myself, who has none of the ordinary hopes and ambitions of other men, and who looks for little in the future, but to end his life as he began it—in prison—may I speak to you frankly?'

Cecilia bowed her head, and he went on.

'You have given my sister and myself the truest, warmest sympathy. If kind

and noble feelings, if earnest wishes could free a country, Ireland would have been freed long ago, and freed by you. But that is not your destiny in life; you, an Englishwoman, are called to other work than ours. You are with us, Miss Tremayne, but you are not of us, and you never can be.'

She shivered a little as he spoke; there was to her something in his words severe and awful as Fate, tenderly and reverently as they were spoken.

'But do not think, I beg you, that what you are called upon to do is a less high and noble work than ours. Your lot is a very hard one, and a very glorious one. It seems to me that you have to bear the widely different burdens of both the two great classes to which you belong. You, as a descendant of an aristocratic and

ancient family, feel that a finer sense of honour, a loftier devotion to duty, is demanded of you, than of those less privileged—whilst your relationship to the people, with whose sorrows and struggles you have always sympathized, forces you —rather than be untrue to them—to give up all the ease and comfort and outward beauty of your life. You, too, are serving your country, Miss Tremayne! you are one of those who make the world sweeter and purer for all who come after you.'

Maurice was speaking to Cecilia now as he had never done before. He who had received her ardent sympathy with his patriotism a little chillingly; who had cared not greatly to talk of Ireland's wrongs and Ireland's hopes to her, an English-woman—now opened his whole heart to her

with a passionate fellow-feeling, when Cecilia's own private and domestic sorrows were in question. He had partaken of her sympathy but sparingly; but he held out sympathy to her with lavish hands.

Cecilia said, in a very low tone,

'I wanted to tell you that the thought of you, what you have had to do, has helped me during the last few days more than anything else. But what are my sufferings compared with yours?'

She felt, rather than saw, the radiance which beamed from Maurice's face, as she said this.

'It is at least some compensation for those sufferings, if they have enabled me to be of any service to you. I can truly say this—that I have felt much of what you are feeling now. You are giving up not only all that is pleasant and

easy and delightful in your life, but everything that is prudent for you to do. You are sacrificing yourself for a mere sentiment, an ideal, so you will be told; but just so one dies for a symbol like a flag—or a vision of the future, like a free and united Ireland. You know,' and his voice sank a little, 'you know there was a time when I could easily have escaped to America; but I think I felt then, just what you are feeling now—"There is only one road open to me, and I must follow it wheresoever it leads me."'

'Wheresoever it leads me,' repeated Cecilia; and then she raised her head, and looked Maurice steadily in the face. Their eyes met, full of lofty and self-forgetful enthusiasm—and they looked at each other, as two martyrs might have looked just before the death-agony.

'Yes, wheresoever that road leads me, I will go,' she said, 'and you have helped and strengthened me on my way.'

There was one moment's perfect silence. Then Cecilia held out her hand. She could bear no more. Maurice clasped it in both his own.

'Our Blessed Mother of Sorrows comfort you!' he whispered, fervently; then with one more look—the last—they turned away, and all was over.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. TREMAYNE COMES HOME.

By the time the Reverend Reginald Tremayne returned from his visit to Exeter, he had quite made up his mind that he should find his niece still at the vicarage.

'A woman of her good sense, her knowledge of the world, it is inconceivable that she should deliberately sacrifice her home, her position in society—I say nothing of myself—to a sentimental fancy about a low-bred woman, of whose very existence she was ignorant until a few days ago!

Cecilia has disappointed me a little, I confess; she has shown a want of her usual judgment and temper about this wretched affair; however, I know I have done the wisest thing possible by leaving her alone for a couple of days to recover herself. By this time she has recognised that by my firmness I have saved her from being placed in a most humiliating position, as regards her unhappy mother—that, in fact, I have taken all responsibility of her decision upon myself.'

The vicar was too proud to inquire after Miss Tremayne from his man, who met him with his brougham at St. Stephen's railway-station. Perhaps also some secret dread kept him from mentioning her name.

It was dark when he alighted at Morwell Vicarage. He walked straight into

the drawing-room. The room was empty, unlighted, no fire burned in the grate, and a sensation of deadly chill made him shiver. Then he turned hastily, and glanced into the dining-room.

'Of course she would not be here,' he muttered to himself. 'Probably she is in her bed-room, or she may be spending the afternoon with Mrs. Rivers.'

Then Mr. Tremayne's face darkened.

'Has Mrs. Rivers got rid of her housekeeper, I wonder? Our charming Irish friend has caused—quite unwittingly, I admit—the most serious disagreement I have ever had with Cecilia.'

The vicar ascended the stairs; he hesitated a moment, then with a sudden impulse he walked down the corridor to Cecilia's room. The door was wide open,

all was dark within. Mr. Tremayne stood on the threshold, holding his antique silver candlestick high above his head, so as to throw the light round the room. It looked bare and uninhabited. He gave another little shiver.

'She has certainly gone to Morwell Lodge,' thought he, as he went back to his own cheerful, fire-lighted bed-room to dress for dinner.

As he set down the candlestick on his dressing-table, he saw lying there a packet covered with white paper, carefully sealed, and addressed to himself in Cecilia's own handwriting. He tore it open, his heart sinking with a dark misgiving. There he found the morocco case which contained his grandmother's diamonds, some other family treasures, and this brief note :

'My dear Uncle,

'I cannot leave you in ignorance of my address, as perhaps the time may come when you may need some service which I can render you. My mother and I have taken lodgings at 25, Marine Terrace, Penzance; and we shall probably remain there the whole winter. I return you your grandmother's jewels; I feel that I have no longer any right to the family heirlooms, but I still venture to call myself, your affectionate niece,

'Cecilia Tremayne.'

The letter fell from the vicar's hand. He stood speechless, motionless, staring straight before him, but seeing nothing. These words seemed sounding in his ears,

'Behold your house is left unto you desolate.'

When, an hour afterwards, Reginald Tremayne went downstairs again, he held his head very erect, his face was very pale, his lips were set in one determined line. He would try to forget that Cecilia had ever been born. It was not only that she had treated him, the man who had been to her as a father, with disrespect and disobedience—his pride tried to ignore the wound to his affections—but she had deliberately disgraced the name of Tremayne, and had cast in her lot with her low-born mother. That was the unpardonable sin; and Cecilia's very remembrance should be blotted out.

Through the dark days of that winter, the vicar confronted, with an inscrutable and haughty face, the wonder and curiosity of friends and neighbours.

'My niece was very well when I last

heard from her,' was his invariable reply to polite inquiries after Miss Tremayne.

'What a long visit she is making,' Mrs. Marsden remarked, with a certain spitefulness.

'Yes, she is thinking of spending the whole winter at Penzance,' Mr. Tremayne answered, cheerfully.

Nobody knew the secret anguish which sometimes consumed that proud and unbending man in the long winter evenings, when he sat alone in his study. He never entered the drawing-room now; he could not bear the sight of Cecilia's work-stand, and the unused piano, and the empty china jars which once she had kept filled with flowers.

His appetite began to fail him when he was at home, for he hated having his meals alone. His face grew wan and deeply

lined; people began to say that the Vicar of Morwell was beginning to be an old man at last. He was now constantly brooding over the past, his memory went back to the time, more than twenty years ago, when Cecilia, a quiet, graceful, little girl had come to live at the vicarage. He remembered Cecilia first becoming the mistress of his household, and what a smooth and prosperous *régime* hers had always been. He remembered their many visits to London together, their yearly journeys on the Continent. All his memories of Cecilia were pleasant ones; she had never worried him with complaints of the servants, or the butcher and baker, or with any other sordid trouble; she never exceeded her allowance, and presented him with unpaid milliners' bills; she had never had a lover.

Often, as he came home from his solitary ride or drive, the fancy possessed him that he should find Cecilia coming to greet him at the door; often as he sat by his lonely fireside, he thought he heard her light footstep on the stairs. Once, he started from a brief and troubled sleep by the dying fire in his study, believing that he heard Cecilia's voice.

'Dear uncle, I have come back to you!'

When he found it was only a dream, tears, almost for the first time in his life, forced themselves beneath his haughty eyelids.

For why should it not have been Cecilia?

'Any moment she may repent and return to me. For I told her I would take her back to my home and my heart, if only she would give up that woman who has come

between us. I would take her back without one word of reproach. Oh, Cecilia, my child, come back to me! I never really meant you to go away!'

But the days went on, and Cecilia did not come back.

One afternoon Mr. Tremayne was riding homewards, feeling—as he neared the vicarage—that the solitude and dulness of his life at Morwell was growing more than he could bear. He came upon Clive Marsden, plodding wearily along. Mr. Tremayne's face brightened, the boy brought to him such a vivid remembrance of Cecilia.

'Why, Clive, I have not seen you for a long time. What have you been doing lately? drawing, eh? Come and dine with me at seven o'clock this evening, and bring your drawings.'

Clive's face flushed with pleasure, and a little embarrassment.

'Thanks, Mr. Tremayne, I shall be delighted to come; but as for my drawings—you must please remember I don't go in for high art, they are mostly decorative things, not worth showing you.'

'Never mind what they are, I flatter myself I know a little about most kinds of artistic work.'

Clive Marsden thought that Mr. Tremayne had never been so pleasant as on this evening. In former days the vicar had had always a few kind words to say to him; still Clive was chiefly a friend of Cecilia's, and as such demanded no particular attention from Mr. Tremayne. But this very fact now gave Clive a new importance in the eyes of Cecilia's uncle,

and he talked to him as genially as if he were his equal in age and standing.

And Clive, who, as he left home that evening, had said to his sister Lina, 'It won't be a bit the same at Morwell Vicarage now Cecilia is away.'—Clive had almost forgotten Cecilia's absence by the time dinner was half over, in enjoyment of the sympathy between himself and Mr. Tremayne in their love of art. For to anyone like Clive, who has a distinct vocation, that vocation must be more permanently interesting than any individual human being.

By-and-by they adjourned to the study, and, at Mr. Tremayne's request, Clive produced a portfolio which contained a perfect medley of drawings. Some were most careful studies of flowers, ferns, and

grasses, full of life and freshness, drawn and coloured with a bold and skilful hand; some were of the same natural objects, conventionally treated, yet with all their strongest characteristics preserved, so as to form original designs for curtains, screens, and other household objects.

'My father says these are all women's work,' said Clive, half apologetically. 'But I don't see why a man should not care to have beautiful things about him in his house as much as a woman. My ambition would be to have all common household things as lovely in form and decoration as they can be made.'

'And all cultured people would feel as you do,' replied the vicar, with inward scorn for his brother parson's Philistinism.

Mr. Tremayne admired Clive's drawings all the more because they were of a style

so different from his own that they could not possibly come into competition with them. He was amazed at their excellence. 'I never knew before we had such a genius amongst us,' he murmured to himself.

'And what are you going to do with all your work?'

'Nothing,' Clive answered sadly, his face, which had beamed at Mr. Tremayne's praise, clouding over again. 'Nothing—what can I do?'

'Such power was not given you for nothing. It strikes me there may be a fortune contained in that brain of yours,' said the vicar, kindly.

'I am afraid not, Mr. Tremayne, nothing but folly and vanity, as my father says;' and Clive smiled rather bitterly.

'Nevertheless, your peculiar talent is one which has a distinct money value, if

you will allow me to look at it in so prosaic a light. If you were a mere landscape-painter like myself, you might run a greater risk of starving. I think I may possibly be able to help you the next time I go to London.'

Clive flushed with sudden hope, but Mr. Tremayne interrupted his thanks—he was too cautious to reveal the purpose in his mind, lest some future day he might have to confess that his influence had failed.

'No, wait—wait until I see what can be done. Perhaps nothing may come of it.'

Clive was about to close his portfolio, when Mr. Tremayne caught sight of some water-colour sketches of heads.

'Why, after all, you have tried your hand at different work. Let me see these!'

'They are studies from life, rather in-

different likenesses, but they are mostly intended to be used in decorative work.'

'Ah!' The vicar gave a little start. He was holding in his hand a portrait of Cecilia, sketched in water-colours. The graceful head, with its wavy brown hair, the sweet, serious eyes of clearest grey, the straight, fine nose, the small and delicate mouth with its touch of haughtiness—in colouring and expression, the drawing was life-like.

'I did not know that was in the portfolio.' Clive coloured, with quite an undefinable feeling. 'I think that is by far the best likeness I have done.'

Mr. Tremayne looked at the portrait with an intent, but quite inscrutable gaze. Then without a word he put the drawing back into the portfolio, and walked away. For a minute he stood on the hearthrug, look-

ing down into the fire; then, without turning round, he said, abruptly,

'Do you ever hear from Cecilia?'

'No, I wish I did. I don't even know her address.'

'I can give you that, if you would like to write to her. 25, Marine Terrace, Penzance—can you remember that? And, if you write, you might mention, if you liked, that you had dined with me this evening, and that I——' There was a moment's pause, as though there was something in the vicar's throat; then he added, in rather a cold, constrained voice, 'You can tell her that I am very well.'

'I will tell her so, certainly,' replied Clive; but he added to himself, 'I don't believe you are very well, all the same. Something has certainly gone wrong, and I cannot help thinking that unexpected

and ghostly mother of Cecilia's has had to do with it.'

'We will have tea now.'

Mr. Tremayne turned round from the fireplace as he spoke. He had quite recovered his ordinary tone and manner, and not another word was said about Cecilia.

CHAPTER X.

TWO SPARROWS.

When Clive Marsden returned home that evening, feeling really stronger in mind and body, for the sympathy and encouragement he had received at Morwell Vicarage, the first person he encountered was his father.

'Where have you been this evening?' the latter demanded, austerely.

'I have been dining with Mr. Tremayne.'

Mr. Marsden gave a short laugh.

'The vicar of Morwell has singular taste in his choice of guests.'

Clive divested himself of his hat and great-coat without a word of reply. But he said to himself, quite coolly and deliberately,

'There is only one man in the world I hate, and that is my father. And, judging from appearances, he equally hates me.'

There is a vast deal of hypocrisy about family affection current in the world. To be of the same blood, may as naturally cause hatred as love. In fact, no other antipathy can be as intense as that which, in many cases, exists between two members of the same family; and it is generally strongest between two of the same sex—between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, because these more commonly,

in daily life, come into collision. Such a dislike is as much a part of nature as breathing, and it will extend, between the two uncongenial persons, to the very tone of the voice, or to the manner of walking; whilst every thought, every habit, every opinion is antagonistic. To fight against this antipathy is to fight against nature, and the only cure for it is death, or life-long separation.

Clive went into the drawing-room, where he found his mother looking flushed and annoyed; apparently giving a lecture to Lina, who sat by the fire, an open book on her lap, a Japanese screen in her hand, with which she was playing; whilst her face wore its frequent expression of slightly amused and scornful indifference.

'Well, Lina,' Mrs. Marsden was saying, 'you will never have such a chance again.

I can't think what more you can want; his father has one of the best practices in the county, and there is some property on the mother's side, I know—he will come into everything by-and-by—and he is quite a gentleman, good-looking, not in the least like an ordinary country lawyer. What more *can* you want?'

'I want this, mother,' answered Lina, a little sternly, 'that a man's intentions shall not be discussed before he has declared them. And secondly,' she added, as she saw Clive come into the room, 'that I should not be discussed before my brother, as if I was merchandise you had to sell.'

Here Clive bolted out of the room again in a great hurry.

'Nonsense!' cried Mrs. Marsden. 'Don't be so absurdly missish and prudish.

You know as well as I do that Mr. Ridgeway only wants an opportunity to declare himself.'

'And that opportunity he shall never have, if I can help it.'

'Why not?' asked Mrs. Marsden, in exasperation.

'Because I don't mean to accept him.'

'Why not?' almost shrieked Mrs. Marsden.

'Because I am not in love with him.'

'And what does it matter whether you are in love with him or not? Such nonsense! I have no patience with girls talking about falling in love. It is downright improper.'

'Not half so improper as marrying a man without being in love with him, I should say, mother.'

'Do you wish to be an old maid then?' demanded Mrs. Marsden, after a pause.

'I have not the slightest objection.'

'Good Heavens! I wish we lived in France, and then you would be *made* to marry a man in every way suitable, like Mr. Ridgeway.'

'I don't think you would make me marry him, even if we did live in France, mother. One can always say, "I will *not*," at the altar rails, and you would hardly find parson or priest who would go on with the service after that. Now, good-night, mother, I think we have discussed this hateful subject enough.'

Mrs. Marsden actually cried with vexation when she was alone. Was ever mother so tried as she was? Harriet, her eldest born, had made a low marriage of

the most shocking kind. Janet, who was created to be a clergyman's wife, had been neglected by all the curates of the neighbourhood, and was fast becoming an old maid. And now Lina, the flower of her flock, absolutely refused even to look at a most eligible young man, who was paying her unmistakeable attentions, and announced her determination of becoming a mistress in a High school. Was it not enough to wring a mother's heart?

Lina was not quite blameless in the matter of Mr. Ridgeway. She had met the handsome young lawyer at several parties that winter, she had danced with him, had sat on staircases with him, had half sympathized with, half scoffed at, his laments that he could not go to the bar, but must put up with the solid loaves and fishes of a partnership in his father's

practice as a country solicitor. And, not being naturally incapable of flirtation like her friend, Cecilia Tremayne, Lina had amused herself generally with Mr. Ridgeway, until she began to find out that—unlike herself—he was in earnest. Then she quietly, but firmly drew back. But it was too late.

Too late for Lina to escape incessant lectures, warnings, admonitions from her mother, who, poor woman, had been plotting, planning, watching her prey with breathless interest. And then, when she had triumphed in his being fairly ensnared, to have all her hopes dashed to the ground by Lina's own obstinacy! Still Mrs. Marsden did not despair; Mr. Ridgeway had not 'spoken' yet. She would contrive several opportunities for him; and then, when at last he had declared himself, she

trusted that Lina would be forced to accept him.

At first the fortunes of war appeared to favour Mrs. Marsden. She executed the bold strategic movement of inviting Mr. Ridgeway to spend a couple of days at St. Stephen's Vicarage—her opportunity being the giving of an evening-party and carpet dance, one of the few entertainments the Marsdens were able to afford.

'Philip will grumble dreadfully when the bills come in,' sighed Mrs. Marsden to herself, 'but we must do something for the girls. And, if it only leads to Lina's being settled in life, we ought not to grudge the expense.'

The invitation was complacently accepted by Mr. Ridgeway. Mrs. Marsden was triumphant, and Lina felt the situation was becoming dangerous enough for her to

need an ally. Janet, of course, could not be depended upon; she agreed with her mother that any woman must be mad who refused any man who was well connected, well-conducted, and well-to-do. So Lina was forced to take into her confidence a member of the sex with which she was just then at war.

'Clive,' she addressed her brother with a sort of tragio-comic solemnity—'if you desert me at this crisis I shall look upon you as a traitor. You must stick to me like a burr, and never let that man be alone with me one single instant.'

'All right; I'll help you keep him at arm's length. He is an awful puppy, and I hate the very sight of him,' Clive answered, vindictively; for, as often happens to the younger brothers of pretty girls, the sister's lover found him in the way and

treated him as if he were a schoolboy. 'Still don't you think, Lina, it would be the wisest plan to let matters come to a point, and so get rid of the fellow for good and all?'

'No, if I am forced to refuse him outright, I place myself in the wrong with the authorities, don't you see? Whereas, if I can manage to send him about his business without either of us committing ourselves, nobody can *prove* I ever had a chance of accepting him. Besides, it is only fair to the man to stop him in good time.'

'I daresay you are right; I know nothing about love-affairs, and don't want to know. However, I'll stand by you, Lina, never fear. It is rather fun outwitting all their machinations;' and by the word 'their' Clive evidently included more than Mr. Ridgeway.

The young lawyer—a good-looking man of five-and-twenty, with carefully trimmed moustache, and everything about him spruce and spick and span—came to the party at St. Stephen's Vicarage quite prepared to see and conquer. But Lina dexterously evaded him the whole evening, using her position as daughter of the house to introduce him to every girl in the room, instead of dancing with him herself; even saying a little imperiously—'Do go and dance with Janet, she does not get half so many partners as I do;' and so dismissing him, with a rueful face, to seek her sister.

All the next day, Clive played his part like a man, keeping close to Lina's side, even holding her by the arm, when they all went for a walk; so that the edifying spectacle was presented of the younger

sister being attended by a masculine companion on each side, while the meek elder sister trudged behind alone. Indoors Clive drew his chair close to Lina's, and persistently read or painted without moving, until Mr. Ridgeway was led to exclaim, petulantly,

'You two seem quite inseparable.'

'Yes, we are generally taken for twins, of the Siamese persuasion,' was Lina's demure answer.

On the second evening of Mr. Ridgeway's visit, there was to be a concert in the school-room of a village three miles distant. Mrs. Marsden laid her plans with skill. She herself would drive in the hired pony-carriage at a walking pace, leaving the others, Janet, Lina, Clive, and Mr. Ridgeway, to take it in turns to be her companions. It would be unheard of

ill-luck if she could not shuffle these cards so as to leave Lina to walk with Mr. Ridgeway for part of the distance. But

> 'The best-laid schemes of mice and men
> Gang aft agley.'

Half-an-hour before the time of starting, the rain came down in torrents. What was to be done? By no contrivance could the pony-carriage be made to hold more than three. It was out of the question that Janet should be left behind, for she was engaged to play at the concert the accompaniments of one of the leading vocalists—Mr. Foster, an unmarried curate. Neither could Mr. Ridgeway as a guest, nor delicate Clive, nor Lina as a young lady, be expected to walk through rain and wind and mire. Nor was even Mrs. Marsden capable of proposing that Lina

and her lover should remain at home together. It was like the old puzzle of the fox, the goose, and the corn, which exercised the man crossing the ferry in a boat which would hold only one at a time of his possessions.

Clive settled the matter for himself by taking up his position by the drawing-room fire.

'Nothing will induce me to stir out in such weather, for a wretched amateur performance.'

'It is so unfortunate that the pony-carriage will not hold more than three,' murmured Mrs. Marsden, disconsolately. 'I would willingly remain at home too, only I fear people would think it odd if I were to let my dear girls appear at the concert without a chaperon.'

'I am inclined to have face-ache,' said

Lina, in a matter-of-fact tone, 'and I am sure going out in such weather would not improve it. So I shall stay at home, and then you can all drive.'

'And you, Mr. Ridgeway, what are you inclined to do?' Mrs. Marsden smiled sweetly at him, hoping that he also would prefer to stay at home.

But Mr. Ridgeway saw no hope for himself that evening, considering that Clive was still playing the part of buffer; so he answered gallantly—knowing that nothing is ever lost by politeness to the mother of one's 'affections' object'—

'We must not all desert you, Mrs. Marsden, and I shall be delighted to accompany you to the concert.'

Clive and Lina spent a peaceful evening together in the drawing-room. Their father was safe in his study writing next

Sunday's sermon. It was half-past ten. Clive had gone upstairs to bed; Lina was standing before the fire, and was beginning to think that she should be safer if she followed his example, when there came a ring at the front door-bell.

'There they are, home already, but I did not hear the pony-carriage wheels.' The thought had hardly crossed her mind when the drawing-room door opened, and Mr. Ridgeway entered, alone.

There was a slight flush on his cheeks, and an amount of agitation about him, which at once put Lina on the defensive. She stood on the hearthrug, looking very picturesque in her black evening gown, with a knot of pink ribbon at her throat; she smiled, but her bright eyes flashed defiance, there was something bewitching and yet unapproachable about her.

'Mrs. Marsden and your sister will be home directly,' he began, seeming a little out of breath. 'It is a fine night, so I walked—I wanted to speak to you, Miss Marsden—I have had no opportunity all day—there is something I very much wish to ask you.'

'Really.' Lina interrupted him with a little laugh. 'What can you possibly have to ask me? and with such a very important and mysterious manner! Dear me! what *can* it be?'

He was disconcerted for a moment.

'I—I—Miss Marsden—will you give me your photograph?'

Lina laughed again.

'Don't think me very rude, but your solemn manner, and then such a commonplace thing to ask, it reminds me of the street-sellers in the East—"In the name

of the Prophet—figs!" Of course I will give you my photo, if I can find one to-morrow; it is too late to look for it to-night. How did you like the concert?'

'I did not pay much attention to the music, I must confess. I was anxious to get back to the vicarage. I wanted to see you.'

'How very disappointed Janet will be at your not paying any attention to the music. She has been slaving away at Mr. Foster's accompaniments for weeks. Some people take such a time to learn anything,' she added, significantly.

'Will you not give me your serious attention for one moment?'

Mr. Ridgeway was beginning to get impatient.

'No, I really cannot to-night, I am so

tired and stupid that I am ready to be quite uncivil, and then perhaps you will commit me for contempt of court—I forgot though—it is only a judge who can do that, isn't it? not every kind of lawyer. What a good thing it is for me that you are not a judge!'

Lina was talking nonsense just to gain time. As she stood on the hearthrug facing Mr. Ridgeway, with a mocking smile, she slid her hand behind her, and energetically pulled the bell. The maid-servant appeared.

'Shut the shutters, if you please, Anne, and you can put out the lamp, I am going to bed; and show Mr. Ridgeway into the dining-room, supper is laid there for him—and stay a moment, Anne, I want you to light my candle. I am sure you will

excuse my bidding you good-night, Mr. Ridgeway. My mother and Janet will be home directly.'

'There,' thought Lina, as she went upstairs, 'if he does not take that for an answer, he *must* be a fool! Oh, dear me, it has been so like a couple of sparrows!'

She laughed until she almost cried, remembering one of the little bird-scenes one may see in every spring. An amorous cock-sparrow, with drooping wings and tail outspread like a fan, chirping and hopping round an unresponsive hen, who every moment, as he comes near her, makes little darts at him, and pecks him soundly until he flies away in despair.

It was evident, next morning, that Lina's tactics had been successful, and

that the allies, Mr. Ridgeway and Mrs. Marsden, had been routed with great slaughter. The young lawyer had a stiff and sulky air at breakfast-time, and he departed soon afterwards without repeating his request for the photograph.

'I shall probably not see you again for some time,' said he, in somewhat of an injured tone, as he coldly shook hands with Lina. 'I wish you every happiness.'

She drew a long breath of relief as the house-door closed upon him.

'There, he is gone for good; and nobody can say that I have refused him.'

Soon afterwards Mrs. Marsden called her into her room, with an ominous

'Lina, I wish to speak to you.'

Lina obeyed, comforting herself with the reflection that no amount of maternal

wrath could bring back Mr. Ridgeway any more than last year's snow.

'You girls are enough to break my heart;' and Mrs. Marsden threw herself into an arm-chair. 'As if I had not suffered enough through Harriet, but you must behave in this way! And there was Janet last night, she made such dreadful blunders in playing Mr. Foster's accompaniments—nothing but nervousness; I am sure she practised them until I was sick of hearing them—but he did not seem at all taken with her; quite the reverse. Janet is always unlucky—but you, Lina, one might expect something from you, and you are the worst of all!'

'What have I done, mother?' asked Lina, with a sweet and innocent face.

'You know very well what you have

done! You have refused Mr. Ridgeway, and thrown away the best chance you will ever have in your life!'

'Indeed, mother, I have not refused him. "Nobody asked me, sir, she said."'

'Then what did he mean by going off in such a hurry this morning? You *must* have refused him; for, as he was bidding me good-bye in the hall, he said he had been very unlucky in not being first in the field, for it was evident that Miss Lina's affections were engaged elsewhere. And now I wish to know, Lina, whether you are carrying on some low, clandestine engagement like your sister Harriet?'

'He said that, did he? he dared to say that my affections were engaged elsewhere!' Lina was thoroughly angry now. 'How like a man! They always think,

if you have not the good taste to admire their perfections, it can only be because you are already in love with some other member of their incomparable sex. The conceit of the creatures! They cannot, or they will not, believe that a girl can be perfectly happy without any of them. No, mother, thank you. I don't feel in the least inclined to follow Harriet's example. I don't think she looks quite happy enough to suit me.'

'Answer me, Lina, have you or have you not, refused Mr. Ridgeway?'

'I have not refused him, for the sufficient reason that he has not proposed to me. Still, I think he never did a more sensible thing in his life than when he walked off this morning. And now, if you please, mother,' added Lina, recovering her good

humour, 'we will put up a tombstone to Mr. Ridgeway, with R. I. P. on it, for all the lamentation in the world won't bring him to life again as my admirer.'

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH.

Cecilia's little sitting-room at 25, Marine Terrace, Penzance, seemed all bow-window. You looked first into a tiny garden, with a iron railing, then across the road and the broad pavement of the esplanade, to the sea.

The shores of Mount's Bay, which has some resemblance, in miniature, to the bay of Naples, stretched to right and left, with little St. Michael's Mount as a point

of interest, instead of Vesuvius. When the morning sun shone, as it often does in winter days in the far south-west, the sea had a broad pathway of dazzling glory, like myriads of diamonds quivering and flashing; the town, with St. Mary's church-tower and the dome of the town-hall rising above the clustered houses, glittered white against a deep blue sky; the wooded hills beyond glowed softly purple—one never sees elsewhere in England such tenderly bright hues in winter. Here and there in the little gardens, roses, carnations, geraniums were still blooming at Christmas-time; in another month tulips, scarlet anemones and white narcissus would be in flower. Autumn softly passes into spring in a place whose mean temperature in January is the same as Athens; and where the warm vapours of the Gulf

Stream make the winter nights as soft and balmy as the days.

It may have been, as Mrs. Tremayne supposed, that it was the climate of Penzance which made Cecilia so weary and languid, and so disinclined for exertion for some weeks after the mother and daughter had taken up their abode there. Day after day, a sense of fatigue overpowered her, and she lay for hours on the sofa which was placed in the bow-window, her eyes sometimes closed, sometimes gazing on the sea.

Only in the pages of novels does brain fever invariably follow intense grief and anxiety. That disorder, with all its circulating-library associations, is rare enough in most medical practice. In real life, a severe mental shock is much more often followed by various prosaic and by no

means alarming bodily symptoms—such as ailments of the nerves and digestive organs.

'Oh, if I could only be alone, if I could only have rest for a little while!' so Cecilia sighed to herself sometimes in despair, as her mother—sitting beside her, in her black silk gown and picturesque mob-cap, knitting stockings—went softly prattling on and on, chiefly rambling stories about her life in America.

'When I was at Westonville—' they all began.

Cecilia could have cried out at last with nervous irritation when she heard those fatal words—the very name, Westonville, with its barbarous mixture of French and English derivations, set her teeth on edge. Sometimes she would take up a book, which she was too weary to do more

than pretend to read, as a sort of defence. But, just when she thought her mother had really no more to say, she would, regardless that Cecilia appeared to be absorbed in reading, begin another 'story without an end.'

There is nothing in human life more amazing than the never-failing pleasure which many people find in talking. If they are sad, they talk to ease their griefs; if they are happy, they talk as a safety-valve to their spirits; if they read a book or a newspaper, they talk about it while they read; if they have a great many things to do, they talk about their work; if they have nothing to do, they talk still more; they talk to strangers to wile away the tedium of a journey by rail or steamer, they talk to friends and acquaintances as if to fulfil the most sacred duty and the

sweetest pleasure of social life; nothing but severe illness can lessen their powers of speech, and the sharpest sting of death to them is the silence of the grave.

Cecilia's only respite was when Mrs. Tremayne departed into the sitting-room of the landlady of the lodgings. She found an appreciative listener in Mrs. Bosustow, a kindly, good-natured, rather sentimental widow who seemed to have grown fat upon the hundredweight of novels she consumed, and who found real life rather dull in the little Cornish town. She hailed Mrs. Tremayne's stories of her American days as something romantic and out-of-the-common, and there grew up a friendship between the two widows, the landlady and her lodger, which was a great consolation to Cecilia.

There were only one or two subjects in

which she had anything in common with her mother. Mrs. Tremayne had not lost that love of nature, that keen eye to see beauty in sea and earth and sky, which long ago had first attracted to her her unlucky artist husband. She was passionately fond of flowers, and arranged them in their little sitting-room with perfect taste. And once Cecilia was startled by her mother's quick appreciation of a good picture, and her shrewd criticisms on others, which they saw at one of the art exhibitions they sometimes have at Penzance.

So, when a soft babble of talk was heard in Mrs. Bosustow's sitting-room, Cecilia would often put on her hat and cloak, steal out unobserved, and, crossing the esplanade, would descend the flight of steps to the sands below. There she

would wander up and down for an hour or two beside the breaking waves, plunged in that profound sadness which the sea often brings to sensitive people, yet thankful for solitude and silence and the vast space around her.

The best days of her life, its hopes, its brightness, were all over for her. In days gone by, amidst the luxury and beauty of her uncle's home, she had sometimes beaten her wings against the gilded bars of her cage, longing for wider interests, for a life nobler, fuller, higher, even if less easy and pleasant, than hers ever could be at Morwell Vicarage. And now her world had still more contracted, and she was doomed to an existence duller, narrower, pettier than any she had ever realized before—except when sometimes she had glanced with exceeding pity on some poor

gentlewoman doomed to eke out a scanty income in humble lodgings, like those in Marine Terrace.

The very smallness of these lodgings was a trial to her—the low ceilings, the cramped staircase, the crowded chairs and tables, which seemed always in the way—after the space and air and roominess of a country gentleman's house. The very ease and dignity with which Cecilia moved, showed that she had been brought up amidst large and spacious surroundings. Then one day, there suddenly came to her a thought which lifted her far above these petty vexations.

'Maurice O'Donovan's prison-cell was smaller than mine.'

Sometimes her whole nature rose up in wild revolt against the two people most nearly related to her, her uncle and her

mother—the gentle, wearisome mother, to whom she had sacrificed her happiness, and who had not only accepted the sacrifice, but did not appear to know it was one. She admired Cecilia, she was proud of her, she was ready to devote herself to her, to become her servant; she lavished all her affection upon her daughter, and it never entered her head to suppose that Cecilia was not now far happier living with her mother, than she could be with anybody else in the world—except, perhaps, a husband.

'Such a dull life for a girl,' Mrs. Tremayne said one day; 'living at Morwell Vicarage, with no parents, no brothers and sisters, nobody but a parson, a regular old bachelor in all his ways.' She could never have understood that the comparative freedom and independence of Cecilia's

life was to her its greatest charm. Mr. Tremayne's 'bachelor ways'—his habits of seclusion, spending hours alone in his study, drawing or reading; his preference for driving alone when he went out in his brougham, to having even Cecilia for his companion; his absolute silence for the whole of a winter evening, when he sat by the drawing-room fire-side absorbed in a novel—these 'bachelor ways' were delightful to Cecilia, who could live much of her own life undisturbed.

Whilst her mother's caressing, clinging fondness, was to Cecilia like soft arms twined round her neck, dragging her down, and slowly suffocating her. Mrs. Tremayne's fussing over her health, her terrors lest she should take cold if she went out in the rain, her struggles to keep the windows shut lest the wind should

blow too roughly upon her, her lamentations at meal-times if Cecilia's appetite was bad—all this was a worry and an irritation to a woman accustomed for years, as she had been, to be the mistress of a household, able to go in and out, to eat or not eat, as she pleased. For what is love worth if it be not accompanied by tact and sympathy and understanding? it may become a very mill-stone hung round the neck of the beloved one.

Then, when Cecilia recalled her past life at Morwell—how her uncle had never worried her, never interfered with her, but had gone his own way, and let her go hers; as she remembered what a thorough harmony there had been between them in their daily, household life—for the fundamental differences in their opinions had ever been kept out of sight—how, by the

sympathy there was between them, Cecilia could always divine her uncle's tastes and likings, and found it an easy and a pleasant task to gratify them—when she remembered all this, sometimes in the dead of night, a storm of grief and regret and indignation would overwhelm her.

He had thrust her out of his home without compunction, this man whom she had looked upon as a father; he had sacrificed her—as he had sacrificed her mother before her—to the ruthless Moloch of his family pride.

'And my mother would have been content then with so little, she asked only that I should visit her sometimes in her distant home; never would she have obtruded herself upon him, he might have ignored her existence, and have forgotten it in time. But he cares nothing for me,

I who have been like his own daughter for so many years: he cared only that I was a Tremayne, and now, that in his eyes I am no longer worthy of the name, he casts me off for ever.'

Every time the postman came up the little garden to the front door her heart throbbed with the hope—hope always disappointed—that at last her uncle might have written to her. She craved for tidings from Morwell; it was like being dead and forgotten to know nothing of her old home; how fared it with her uncle, with Clive and Lina Marsden, with her old servants and the village people, with her garden, her flowers, and—not least—her tame robin. Sometimes, she thought she must run the risk of her uncle's increased displeasure, and write to him; but she was kept silent by the rememberance that he

knew her address, and could write to her if he wished, and that he had never replied to her farewell letter. She determined that before the winter was over, she would write to Lina Marsden, but there was an inevitable amount of humiliation in the step she had taken of leaving her home to descend in the social scale, which made her shrink from any communication with her friends, until all hope of reconciliation with her uncle was at an end.

And when Christmas morning came, and brought with it no letter, no token of remembrance from Morwell Vicarage—then Cecilia felt herself indeed forsaken.

Christmas Day passed like a dream to her. The sun shone brilliantly from the time he rose above the long, low line of the distant Lizard, until he sank in gold and crimson glory above the wooded heights

in the direction of the Land's End. At the Tremaynes' early dinner the window was wide open, and mignonette, still flowering in a sheltered corner of the garden, perfumed the air. The table was decorated with Gloire-de-Dijon and pink monthly roses, which had been blooming out of doors, and there was also a glass or two of pink campions and fern leaves and sweet-scented butter-bur, which Mrs. Tremayne had picked on the hedge banks.

After dinner the mother and daughter went down to the sea-shore. It was nearly low water, and they spent the whole of that golden afternoon sitting on the rocks, which the tide had left bare. There were shallow pools in these black and slaty rocks, fringed with long tresses of pink or dark green sea-weed, here and there was a crimson sea-anemone, or the

gleam of a pearly shell. The low rays of the afternoon sun, with pink lights and purple shadows, slept softly on the shores of Marazion: the scattered houses, the rocks and towers of St. Michael's Mount stood out like delicate carved work. The sea was smooth as glass, shallow ripples broke on the sands with only the faintest murmur; the red-brown sails of the Mount's bay fishing-boats glowed against the cloudless sky. The townspeople, and those few visitors who know the charms of Penzance in winter, were walking up and down, or crowding the seats on the esplanade; but Mrs. Tremayne and Cecilia were undisturbed in the solitary nook they had found amongst the rocks.

Cecilia, long trained to self-repression—for with her uncle she had never uttered one of her deepest thoughts and feelings

—was able to seem bright and cheerful this Christmas afternoon, although her heart ached at times with downright physical pain. It was one of the struggles of her life—a struggle which almost exhausted her strength—to try to seem happy in her present home, and to hide all her regrets for the time before she had known her mother.

'Tell me about my father,' she said, hoping to divert her mother's talking powers into a more interesting channel than their usual drift, the farm at Westonville where the happiest years of Mrs. Tremayne's life had been spent. And then when Cecilia had heard all that her mother had to tell—it did not seem much, after all, and Cecilia had heard it before—about Gerald Tremayne, with his charming ways, his sweet temper, his

artistic tastes, and also his improvidence, his lavish generosity, his general recklessness, which finally placed himself, his wife and child, all at the mercy of the elder brother—then Cecilia said,

'Mother, can you tell me anything about my uncle when he was a young man?'

'Well, I don't know that I can tell you much about him. He was always a striking-looking man as long as I can remember, tall and mortally proud-looking, and clear, bright eyes that seemed as though he had never done anything to be ashamed of—your eyes are like his, my dear—and a way with him that was very gentle, but which frightened some people—I know it did me, because it made me feel so small and so common beside him. I guess you wonder how a man like

him could have treated me so cruelly as he did. But I shall always think there was something in his past life which accounts for the horror he had of his brother's marrying me.'

Cecilia's cheeks flushed with eager interest—was she at last to possess the clue to her uncle's almost inexplicable hardness of heart where his brother's *mésalliance* was concerned?

'Did you ever hear tell,' Mrs. Tremayne resumed, 'about Lizzie Awdry, the village school-mistress?'

'Never—what do you mean?'

'Well, have you never wondered why your uncle did not marry, such a fine handsome man as he has always been?'

'Yes, I have wondered, certainly,' Cecilia answered, a little reluctantly; she was divided between a longing to know a little

more of her uncle's history, and a shrinking from discussing it with Mrs. Tremayne. She had an instinctive feeling that after all her uncle and herself were very near akin, and her mother was only an outsider. 'Of course, some men in his position would have been very anxious for an heir; but, after all, my uncle and my father belong to the younger branch of the Tremaynes, the estates have all gone to a distant cousin.'

'I know all that, my dear,' replied Mrs. Tremayne, complacently, 'I know pretty nearly all there is to tell about the family. And I guess you don't know all that I do. Well, when your uncle was a young man of three-and-twenty, just ordained curate to a little parish in Cornwall, I forget the name of it, there was a young woman there, Lizzie Awdry by name, the village school-

mistress. I conclude, from what your father told me about her, she was just one of those girls who somehow can make any man they choose go quite out of his mind. I can't tell how they do it, I am inclined to think no really decent woman knows, but there are women like it everywhere, not much to look at, some of them. I conclude they were born to make fools and worse of men, so as to take vengeance upon them for all the misery men bring upon women. Well, my dear, your father told me that your uncle Reginald, haughty, high-spirited man as he was, who thought hardly any lady of his own sort good enough for him to look at, was sent clean off his head by this Lizzie Awdry. There was some poetry your father read to me once, he was very fond of reading to me, and I shall always remember that poem,

because the woman in it—Vivien, I think she was called—was just like Lizzie Awdry.'

'Mother!' and Cecilia recoiled with a cry of pain. 'It is not possible! No, I cannot believe that of Uncle Reginald!'

'Dear Cecilia, don't mistake me; there was nothing wrong of that sort, my husband assured me. No, no, Lizzie Awdry took good care of herself, and all she thought about was making a good match. No, indeed; your uncle promised to marry her, what do you think of that?' cried Mrs. Tremayne, triumphantly. 'Not much better than marrying a servant like me, was it?'

'But, then, why—why was he so angry with my father?'

'My dear, I have found out that there are no people in the world likely to be so

severe to other's faults, as those who have had a secret leaning to those very faults themselves. But I have not told you the end of the story; it was really laughable, though it was anything but a laughing matter to your uncle. That hussy went on fooling him, and making him just like a crazy man for any good he was in the parish—then one fine morning she goes off and gets married to a rich grocer at Plymouth, an oldish man and very ugly, by the name of Sloggett. Well, it was nearly the death of your uncle when he heard of it. All his love for her was gone in one minute, and he seemed to wake up like a man out of a drunken sleep. Think how mad he must have been at having been tricked, at letting himself down to offer to marry a low-bred, hardly respectable girl like her, and then

to be jilted after all—he, Mr. Reginald Tremayne, for a grocer! Well, the end of it was he threw up his curacy and fled from the place, for he could not bear the sight of anyone who knew him there; and now, I think, if anyone was to mention to him the name of Lizzie Awdry—or Lizzie Sloggett, the grocer's wife as she is now—it would be like cutting him across the face with a whip.'

Cecilia was quite overwhelmed.

'I can hardly bear to think about it, pray don't say any more. I think I understand him now better than I ever did before.——No wonder he never forgave my father and mother,' she thought bitterly, yet with an intense compassion for her uncle, realising what an agony of humiliation the proud man must have suffered in his youth.

'I can tell you one thing more, Cecilia, to account for his never marrying. Your father was pretty certain that, years after that Lizzie Awdry affair, your uncle offered himself to a lady of his own rank, but she would have nothing to say to him because, you see, she was in love with some one else, and so, from that day forward, he would have nothing more to do with marrying. I must say he has been very unlucky.

'Poor uncle!' and then Cecilia checked herself and said no more—feeling that to a man like Reginald Tremayne pity was but a form of insult.

'Well, my dear,' said her mother, presently, 'I conclude we should be turning our steps homeward. It is near sundown. Though certainly the nights here are nearly as warm as the days. I guess we

should have been pretty surprised at winter weather like this at Westonville.'

Cecilia's one gleam of brightness on Christmas Day was a long and most affectionate letter from Mrs. Rivers. Her husband had returned home from America, and Kathleen wrote thus:

'Now that Maurice is free, this would be the happiest Christmas of my life, if I could think of you, my dear girl, as being happy too. But I know that, noble and beautiful as is the life you have chosen for yourself, it cannot be a bright one. You are constantly in our thoughts, and my husband and Maurice and I often talk of you . . . . I know that you will rejoice with me when I tell you that Maurice seems fairly restored to health, though a strong man again I fear he never will be. Of course our Parliamentary leaders are

now in Ireland, but Maurice has made the acquaintance of some of our countrymen who live in London, chief amongst whom is Mr. A. M. Sullivan, for whom we have the greatest reverence and admiration. *

'Maurice will be legally disqualified for a seat in Parliament until his sentence has expired, three years hence. Otherwise the fact of his having been a seven years' prisoner for the part he took in '67 would make his return certain for almost any Irish borough. But there is no reason why he should not work loyally with our Parliamentary party outside the House of Commons, even though he may not agree with them on every point. It has been the curse of our country for ages that our people could not sink their various minor

* Alas for Ireland, that one of the noblest of her sons now sleeps in Glasnevin Cemetery.

differences, and work together for one great, common cause, our national freedom. But I need not tell you, who know Maurice, that he is without thought of self; he does not look for glory, for even popularity amongst his countrymen; all he asks for is the honour of being allowed to suffer for Ireland.'

In the catastrophe which had fallen on Cecilia's life, her mind had lately been too full of conflicting claims, too full of strife and anxiety, and the uprooting from her home and all past associations, for Maurice to hold the first place in her thoughts. But just as when the surface of a clear lake is ruffled by the wind, the depths are not disturbed, and as soon as the wind dies down the lake again reflects the quiet sky and the lonely stars, so—now all hope of her uncle's relenting, and of

her return to Morwell Vicarage had passed away—Cecilia became calm again, and her mind was once more filled with the lofty vision of her love.

'It is not likely we shall ever meet again,' she thought. 'Marriage between us is impossible, and not even to be desired. But love Maurice O'Donovan I shall, whilst I live and move and have my being.'

CHAPTER XII.

A PACK OF CARDS.

It was Sunday, the day in all the week most dreaded by Harriet Wendron. For on that day the dulness of her whole life at Radford Farm seemed to culminate. All her illusions, all her fancies that marriage was the gateway of a new world, had faded long ago, and she found that existence at the farm was far more wearisome and depressing than it used to be at St. Stephen's Vicarage.

'At least,' she thought, regretfully, 'I

had Clive, and the girls to talk to, and we had good fun sometimes; but here—oh, heavens! I think I shall yawn myself into my grave.'

Robert Wendron was no longer the passionate, if somewhat rough and overbearing lover, who had half frightened, half-fascinated her into loving him. He was the most matter-of-fact husband, who had a faithful affection for her at heart, but who paid her no more compliments or attentions than he did his old mother. Harriet saw very little of him. He rose in the winter mornings long before daylight, and went out somewhere about his farm, returning to an early breakfast, to which Harriet used to struggle to come down, but, as often as not, when she appeared, looking sleepy and untidy after a hasty toilet, Robert had gone out again to

appear no more until the one o'clock dinner. At meal times he sometimes hardly spoke a word, or he addressed all his conversation to his mother, for what did Harriet care for 'talk of bullocks,' as the Apocrypha has it. After dinner he was off to the farm again.

No more drives in the dog-cart for Harriet except once a week or so, when they went to Tavistock. Robert wanted the horse, for riding about the moor. He divided the evenings between sleeping and reading the *Western Morning News*, and so the weeks went on, and Harriet, began to think that death from *ennui* might be something more than a Frenchman's myth.

What was there for her to do? She had begun her married life by allowing Robert's mother to superintend all the household

work as before, and now the old lady was jealous of her rights, and disliked interference. Harriet never cared for any books except novels, and she was too much terrified at the thought of meeting her father and mother to venture into the village. Sometimes she would make the excuse of shopping to be done, and would take the train to Tavistock; there she would go wandering up and down the one principal street of the little town, looking into its few shop windows, and buying cheap novels at the railway bookstall. Even this trivial amusement had its alloy when she met some old acquaintances, and they passed her, with heads in the air and eyes looking straight before them, in all the stony impassiveness of a cut direct.

And now Sunday had come, and Harriet

groaned for very weariness. After breakfast—a later and more leisurely meal than on week-days, and prayers of a portentous length, read by Mrs. Wendron with extreme slowness, and emphasis without particular meaning—Robert went off to teach his class in the Sunday school. When they were first married he had proposed Harriet doing likewise, but she only stared in amazement at the idea.

'Even papa never expected me to do that, we left all that sort of thing to Janet.'

Robert said no more, but he had not forgotten his wife's refusal, and he had gone to the Sunday school ever since with a grim and injured air which he hoped might in time work upon Harriet's better feelings.

Robert, looking very handsome in his sombre way, met his wife and mother at the door of Bethesda Chapel. Old Mrs. Wendron, in her plain black gown and widow's bonnet, with her snow-white hair, and fresh complexion, had a homely sort of refinement about her, and Harriet was very different in appearance from the other young women who worshipped in the little white-washed building. Her taste in dress had been educated to a certain extent by her brother Clive, and this had made her seek simplicity and sober hues, so that she was called a poor dowdy by many of the other farmers' wives, who wondered why, if Bob Wendron had chosen to marry a Church parson's daughter, he could not have picked out a smarter looking one.

They went up the narrow wooden stair-

case to their pew in front of the gallery. Old Mrs. Wendron was in a subdued flutter about the preacher for that Sunday. He was the Rev. Mr. Northmore, a shining light in the connection, a regularly ordained minister, no mere 'local,' a draper or grocer with a gift of expounding. Harriet resigned herself with a dull misery to endure the coming hour and a half, thinking, with a vague regret,

'Papa's sermons were stupid enough, but at least we had the chants and the responses to make a variety, and there was always some amusement in looking out for Janet's blunders in playing the harmonium.'

Robert had an air of superior, and rather sulky virtue, which came from much wrestling with the devil in some of his Sunday scholars.

Having folded his arms on the little shelf before him, and devoutly hidden his face upon them, he stood up just as Mr. Northmore, an elderly man with loose jointed limbs, and rather flabby unctuous face, gave out one of Wesley's hymns—Robert stood up for the purpose of disencumbering himself of a heavy great-coat with a velveteen collar. This done, he threw it half over the edge of the pew, which was a front and conspicuous one. And then a very awful thing happened.

From out of the pocket of that great-coat fell a whole pack of cards. Kings, queens, knaves, black and red, with all their belongings, fell in an unholy shower on the pews below, pattering on the hymn books, hitting the bald head of an eminent and elderly class-leader, and the Sunday bonnets of various feminine members of

the congregation. A thrill of horror ran through the chapel. Mr. Northmore came to a dead pause in giving out the hymn, and everybody stared up at the gallery, and fixed their eyes on the Wendrons' pew.

Fortunately for her peace of mind, old Mrs. Wendron was not aware of what had happened, for her spectacled eyes were fixed upon her book, searching for the hymn. Harriet put up her handkerchief to her face to hide her confusion and an irrepressible laugh. When, after a minute, she glanced with mirth in her eyes at the culprit, her husband, she was amazed at his perfectly savage look of rage and shame.

'Good gracious!' she thought, 'it was a very ridiculous thing to happen, of course, but what was there in it to make every-

body seem so awfully shocked? Robert looks as if he were swearing in his heart, which is much wickeder than throwing cards about the chapel.' Harriet did not venture to look at him again, but he had an injured air, half-defiant, half shame-faced, throughout the rest of the service.

By and by Harriet's attention was attracted by the sermon. It was not such a one as she had heard last Sunday, and which had impressed even her shallow mind—a sermon full of power and passion and poetry, even though the preacher of it was only a Cornish shoe-maker.

Mr. Northmore chose for the subject of his discourse the serpents of the Bible, and his remarks thereupon were ingenious, if somewhat singular.*

* The author wishes to state that the following remarks were actually delivered by a preacher from a pulpit in her hearing.

He began with a vivid description of the garden of Eden, and the Tempter therein, 'who was undistinguishable from the grass amidst which he crawled, because he was so green.' Some lively anecdotes of the various serpents in the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens next riveted the attention of all the boys in the congregation, and kept their restless limbs quiet. Then he spoke of the traces of sin in the world, like 'the trail of the tail of the devil amongst the young plants in the garden, as it were,' and, concluding with a lurid picture of a world where the last-named personage is supposed to reign supreme, he 'thanked God that though the belief in eternal punishment was dying out in towns, it still lived on in the country.'

By the time Mr. Northmore had pronounced 'Amen,' Harriet was in a miser-

able, half hysterical state of suppressed laughter, and it was very dreadful to her to remember that she should meet him again that afternoon at her own table.

It was always a red-letter day to old Mrs. Wendron when the minister came to dinner, and she had been very busy all Saturday preparing good things. Harriet had never seen at St. Stephen's Vicarage a table so laden with 'vulgar plenty,' as Mrs. Marsden would have called it—for it was not always easy for her to pay the butcher's bills. Harriet had attempted a mild expostulation.

'Do you think so many things are necessary, Mrs. Wendron? We never had such a number of different dishes at home.'

'Ah! no, I daresay not,' answered Mrs. Wendron, quite mistaking the point of her daughter-in-law's remarks. 'I have heard

as how you at the vicarage were all rather pinched at times to make both ends meet. Ah, dear, dear—'tis sad to see the gentry so poor! But you shall always have enough here and to spare, Harriet, my dear.'

If the old lady's happiness in entertaining her minister had not made her chatter away, the meal would have been a very silent one. Mr. Northmore had an expression which made one think of a tightly corked-up bottle of vinegar. Robert had the sullen, yet defiant look of a criminal in the dock.

'What in the world is the matter with the two men?' thought Harriet. 'The sermon seems to have disagreed with them both.'

The minister probably thought it politic to get dinner over, before he disburdened

himself of the lecture he meant to give his host. Having partaken heartily of every dish on the table, with a faint pretence of resistance when old Mrs. Wendron pressed them upon him, he pushed his plate from him, leaned back in his chair, and began.

'I think, Mr. Wendron, you must feel that I and all the connection expect from you some explanation of the startling and lamentable occurrence which took place at divine worship this morning.'

'Easy enough to explain,' said the prisoner at the bar, looking his judge doggedly in the face, but getting rather red. 'Yesterday afternoon I'd just come home from Tavistock, and I found two young chaps that work on my farm—boys in my Sunday-school class—playing with a lot of old cards in one of my barns. I just gave it to 'em hot, and I put those—'

(a very naughty word all but passed Robert's lips) 'I put those cards into my great-coat pocket, and never thought of them again.'

'You did very right,' replied Mr. Northmore, more mildly. 'Still, your negligence in not at once destroying those painted toys of Satan was very culpable, and may have laid a snare for some of the younger and weaker brethren. We are told to avoid all appearance of evil, Mr. Wendron.'

Harriet was amazed to see her masterful husband sit silent with a shame-faced look to be lectured at his own table by a guest. She did not realize his early training, how he had been taught from his childhood to revere the sacred office of preacher, or she would have known that the 'sacerdotal principle' is often to be found flourishing

in Nonconformist regions. And, moreover, Robert, though he knew he was guiltless, had none of the tact and good-breeding by which a gentleman would have extricated himself with good-humoured ease from such a dilemma. His wife gave a little scornful laugh, and rose from the table.

'Really, I don't see what all the fuss is about. Of course it was a very absurd and tiresome thing to happen, but where would have been the harm if they had been your own pack of cards, Robert? I only wish you would play with me sometimes in the evenings. I would be *thankful* for a game even of "Beggar my Neighbour."'

Robert, although he had told the literal truth about the way in which the unlucky cards had come into his possession, here looked at his wife with the reproach and

helpless fury of a criminal whose comrade had turned Queen's evidence. Harriet left the room, while Mr. Northmore groaned,

'Ah! my dear young friend, you realize the truth of the inspired words: "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" I know how High-Church families are brought up. All forms and ceremonies. No vital religion, sad laxity as to card-playing, and novel-reading, and other worldly amusements. Well—well, Mr. Wendron, we shall look to you to be the means of your wife's conversion.'

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY DUNCAN MACDONALD, BLENHEIM HOUSE.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 042052883